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BY

EDWIN LASSETTER BYNNER

AUTHOR OF "DAMEN'S GHOST," "PENELOPE'S SUITORS," ETC.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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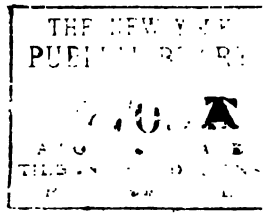
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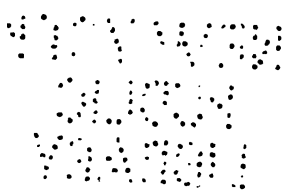

PREFACE.

STUDENTS of early American history are already familiar with the romantic story upon which this book is founded, and will recognize the structural events as well-known historical facts. To others the truth may be pleaded as an excuse for the use of incidents which the story-teller of to-day would hesitate to introduce.

Unwilling to be suspected of inventing truths so much stranger than fiction, the author thinks it fitting to premise this brief word of explanation. Very gladly, too, he avails himself of the same opportunity to express grateful acknowledgments to all those who have in any way aided him in his researches.

Chief among these, thanks are due to Miss Amy Whinyates, of Cheltenham, England, a member of the Frankland family, for much interesting information and valuable unpublished memoranda; to Dr. Samuel A. Green, of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for access to the baronet's autograph diary, deposited in the archives of that Society; to Dr. John F. Pratt, of Chelsea, for various prints of people and

places connected with the story, and especially for the gift of a portrait-etching of the hero himself; to Mr. Samuel Roads, Jr., the historian of Marblehead, for suggestions upon the early dialect of that place; and last, but not least, to the Rev. Elias Nason for a store of facts and dates drawn from his delightful monograph upon the provincial Collector.

E. L. B.

BOSTON, *November*, 1886.

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AGNES SURRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE HARBOR.

SAILING in his little shallop along the rocky coast of Cape Ann, away back in 1631, the agent of the worshipful Matthew Cradock first noted the possibilities of a certain bold promontory and deeply indented shore, and hastened to establish himself there four years at least before the order of the Court of Assistants that "there shalbe a Plantacion at Marblehead."

The result showed the worthy factor's wisdom. Nature plainly meant it for a fishing station; she had been beforehand with man, and made ready the way in uprearing the cliff and scooping out the rocky inlets. Out-thrust aggressively into the bay, shouldering off the waters of Salem Harbor on the left and those of its own miniature basin on the right, the rugged headland seemed to say to the wide universe, "Make room for me and my coming brood!" And what with the bracing air, the flinty soil, and the teeming waters, nowhere in the world could have been found a *fitter* abode for that notable brood.

A witty and graphic little touch was that of the antiquary who compared the enclosing shores of the tiny harbor to "a beckoning finger and a clenched fist." The blunt headland well represents the vigor of the doubled fist, while the long straggling strip of land which forms the eastern side has far more the expression of a crooked finger than of a neck, — the name by which it has long been known.

It matters little about the name, however; "the Neck" it is, and a sturdy, stubborn neck it has proved. Through unknown centuries it has withstood the throttling clutch of the sea, which yet in some wrathful moment would seem to have despoiled it of a goodly carcanet; for strewn thickly about in the neighboring water, like unstrung jewels, lie a score of fair islets, to which the waggish natives have given uncouth and irrelevant names, such as "The Brimbles," "The Cat," "Satan," "Roaring Bull," "Great and Little Misery."

Wee as is the harbor, it is by no means shallow. "Marvalet est composé de 100 ou 200 maisons pescheurs où il peut entrer de gros vaisseaux," wrote a French spy fifty years after the foundation of the little town. And there great vessels might enter to this very hour, if there were any need. But now — alas for the cheating symbols! — the trade and commerce lured thither by the beckoning finger have long since eluded the grasp of the clenched fist; the day of its glory is gone, and nothing now seeks its tranquil haven save the dingy sail of a coasting schooner or the white-winged fleet of the Eastern Yacht Club.

Born here, man had no alternative but to take to the sea. On shore there was scarcely soil enough to raise a potato. "Where do you bury your dead?" asked the astonished Whitefield on his first missionary visit to the town. A natural question. With such scant soil to spare for the quick, the dead must perforce have had short commons. Meagre enough in fact was the drapery vouchsafed for their last couch by the thrifty old-time sexton who tucked them in among the bowlders three or four deep, as the mouldering of the early slumberers made room for the later. Yield him a late pity, that honest old grave-digger! Be assured he met with small sympathy in the flesh. Yet who shall say what knotty problems his grim gardening presented, or into what straits of despair a chance epidemic must have driven him. Nay, go to-day to the ancient God's Acre whoever lists, and see for yourself from the huddled headstones the struggle he had to find comfortable beds for that long line of guests who were endlessly coming to his ghostly hostelry, to go no more out forever.

As for the town, it was much after the pattern of the graveyard in point of order. Like barnacles, muscles, algæ, — an indigenous growth,— the human habitations sprang as it seemed out of the bare rock, or along the precipitous face of the cliff, in rank disobedience of Heaven's first law. Had an earthquake, at some forgotten time, roughly shaken the promontory, and rattled around the black, squat, little buildings like dice in a box? Or, haply, had a tidal wave swept over the rocks and played at harum-scarum? Never was such a jumble of roofs and chimneys,

never such maddening streets, of which one side often climbed the cliff to perch a cabin on its very brow, while the other dived into a gulch to drop a zigzag row of crazy cottages at its base. Down a hillside hither or yonder, a half-dozen houses tumble higgledy-piggledy in an architectural snarl. Here, there, and everywhere, upstarting as from an ambush, black gables peep out with an intelligent and rakish air, like jolly old tars rolling home in tipsy bliss from the tavern. Facing all points of the compass, the houses turn their backs or shoulders with a perverse intent upon the pursuing streets, which with labyrinthine twists wind in and out as if with the futile aim of binding together into a common weal the refractory buildings.

Thus, begotten of Chance and Disorder, the town had at least one marked trait, — individuality. It was strictly of its own kind, — a mad, rollicking kind, you may say; an odd, whimsical, perverse, stubborn, independent kind, no doubt. Strangers might be puzzled, wags might make merry over it, — small matter! Failing to find anything to admire in Marblehead, they nevertheless could not forget it. No visitor but carried away a distinct and lasting impression, even if it were no more savory than that of Captain Goelet, who in 1750 described it as "a dirty, irregular, stincking place." It boots not to inquire what the dainty New Yorker could have expected of a fishing village where six hundred men and boys were employed catching cod, and where the wharves were covered with flakes on which myriads of salted fish lay curing in the sun.

Born and brought up in it, the Marbleheaders were not troubled with the odor. Unlike that of Cologne, it was at least a simple, honest, unmixed stench. No doubt in time they came to regard that as natural which long experience had proved not unwholesome. For the rest, the town, with all its drawbacks, — dirt, odor, and ugliness combined, — was what they had made it: the houses were like shells that had grown about them; the crooked streets, in defiance of proof or demonstration, measured the shortest practicable distance between any two given points.

The lapse of a century sufficed to transform the bare rock of 1631 into one of the most thriving ports in the province. Now down in the little harbor were to be seen ships flying foreign colors, — ships from Holland or Portugal, queer-looking schooners from Havana or St. Kitt's, which rumor said were unloaded in the night. Indeed, there had long been whispers of a trade less innocent than fish, involving contumacious evasion of certain fees and charges imposed by a number of obtuse and obstinate gentlemen across the water technically called the Government.

Long ago vague rumors had reached the Lords of Trade that Marblehead was a smuggling port for Boston. Nor had it been forgotten that in days gone by Quelch the pirate was taken here, with seven of his crew, who, it was darkly whispered, had many friends and relatives among the hardy fishers of the Head.

At home, the case was not much better; these fishers did not bear a specially good repute among

their Puritan neighbors in Boston, Lynn, and Salem. One reverend chronicler speaks of them as "a rude, swearing, fighting, drunken crew," and a later historian of the cloth gives them a character no better. It is much to be feared that some of this is true; they were rough diamonds, no doubt, with little in their lives or surroundings to make them otherwise. Profanity is the acknowledged vernacular of the sea; and where good spirits in plenty, free of all duty, were at hand, temperance would have been an unnatural virtue.

But for all this, those proud pharisaical Bostoneers disdained not to accept their services at a pinch. When they wanted material for their navy, bold pilots, hardy crews for their snows and frigates, where did they find such stuff as in stanch old Marblehead?

Old Marblehead — older now by nearly a century and a half — still wears in the main the self-same aspect. A new town, to be sure, — a town of factories and shoe-shops, — has sprung up alongside the old, as beside an ancient dame a bustling, antic granddaughter, who decks herself in modern trim, practises latter-day graces, and echoes the tumult of the outer world, — who, in fine, is inoculated with the feverish unrest, the irreverence and agnosticism of another age.

Yonder the while sits the grandam on her rock by the sea, crooning over the past amid her rotting cod-flakes, the deserted ramparts of her old fort, and the moss-grown gravestones of her forgotten worthies. The briny flood has proved a conserving power.

Here has been no change but that of disintegration, — a change slow-paced, solemn, and poetical. The self-same streets still writhe and twist about, like the avenging sea-serpent of the Grecian myth; the self-same houses, too, — here and there disfigured by modern paint and patches, — still cling to their rocky foundations, awaiting the slow but inevitable approach of the great Juggernaut of Trade which has already sounded their doom.

For obvious reasons the earlier settlers clustered about a small inlet at the north end of the peninsula called "Little Harbor," which for a long time was the centre of life and affairs. Perched thus upon the end of a rock and surrounded by water, they were peculiarly exposed to hostile attack from the sea. Harbor fortifications, indeed, everywhere throughout the province were in a sadly neglected state. But a change was coming. The espousal of the cause of Maria Theresa by the new Carteret ministry precipitated a war with France. Now at last the province took alarm; and what with the martial energy of the new governor, and the daily expectation of a French descent upon the coast, the people were awakened to the necessity of taking some measures for the protection of their seaports. Thus it happened that among other points to be fortified, orders went out for the building of a fort at Marblehead.

On the western slope of the hill upon which early in the spring of 1742 this fort was in process of building, stood a little, low-browed, unpainted cottage, quite apart from its neighbors. Lobster-pots, fishing-

creels, refuse buckets, and broken oars scattered about the open door bespoke the occupation of the owner, who, as if to complete the picture, chanced to be sitting, one bright afternoon memorable to this narrative, on a low bench to the left of the door busily engaged in mending his fishing tackle. If he had been a whit less brawny, hirsute, and sunburnt, the exquisite effect of entire harmony with his surroundings would have been wanting. If his homespun trousers, rough shirt, and battered hat had been a shade less greasy and weatherworn, they could not have had so exactly the value of a physical outgrowth, like the bark to a tree or the lichen to a rock.

Outspread before him was a busy and picturesque scene. It was high tide in the little cove; several shallops lay already at their moorings quietly unloading their fish, while two or three heavily laden ketches were tacking up before the brisk off-shore breeze to make the anchorage. In the immediate foreground the slope from the door down to the waterside was covered with rows of fish-flakes, on which were spread out the results of the last trip to "the Banks." Beyond, the little beach was swarming with the life of the village. It was the busiest hour of the day. The men were at work receiving and disposing of the incoming haul, the women chatting among the flakes, piling up the half-cured fish to be covered for the night, while children romped with screams and laughter about the narrow sands. Across the cove, half way up the opposite hill, stuck like a limpet on the rock, was the quaint little Fountain Inn with its flourishing orchard and its scanty strip

of greensward sloping downward toward the cliff; while high up above all, on the very brow of the hill, stood the old graveyard with its fringe of rude headstones sharply outlined against the yellow evening sky.

The fisherman, glancing up now and then from his task, regarded the scene with the look of one long familiar with its every detail. From his absorbed air and motionless lips, one would not have suspected that he was engaged in conversation; but in fact he was from time to time grunting an inarticulated assent or dissent, as the case required, to some female loquacity from within. A twice-repeated question, however, having failed of answer, the woman at length came to the door. No fitter helpmeet for the man could have been imagined. Her weather-beaten skin bore the marks of exposure, and her stalwart arms, of toil as severe as his own. Otherwise, nothing but the expression of motherliness in her common face and slouchy figure distinguished her from the typical fishwife. Seating herself clumsily in the doorway with a long-drawn sigh of relief, she repeated her question: —

"Wher's the young uns, oi say?"

The fisherman simply pointed over his shoulder, without speaking.

"Oi worrnt — oi worrnt ye, the for-rt; ther'll be nothin' but th' for-rt heerd o' now. D'ye see how they stor-rted at it this mor-rnin'? Ther' they wor, at th' crack o' dawn, an ar-rmy o' shov'lers 'n' neggers, 'n' th' whole town at the'r heels. Say what ye will, oi don' loike th' tho't o' it. It 's fur th' French-

ers, the' say. What do th' Frenchers want o' us? They 'd never foind us, nuther, 'f we kep' dor-rk 'n' moinded our own business; but clap a lot o' bloody-moinded dragoons in ther' for-rt, to bang away at ev'ry sail passin', no motter-r who 's hit, 't 'll modden th' Frenchers, oi say, 'n' th'll foire back."

"Loike eno'."

"'Loike eno'!' 'n' then what? The dragoons th'll be safe 'n' sound behoind the'r for-rt; but what 's to hinder-r a ball comin' down upon us?"

"Nothin', 't oi see."

"An' ther ain't nothin', nuther, — 'n' then what? D' ye know th' soize o' 'em, them the'r cannon-shot? The soize o' yer head, oi 'm told, 'n' gretter too; they 'd bring down th' house over our heads, 'n' kill us all, beloike."

"'Beloike!'"

"What 're we stayin' here fur, then? Out o't wi' ye, whoile ther's toime!"

"Wher' to?"

"What matters? Over yonder, in th' nex' cove beyont th' berrin'-groun'!"

"Toime eno' t' run when yer hor-rt."

"No, it 's not nuther, no toime 't all t' run when yer hor-rt — "

"Ye 'll git wor-rnin', never fear!"

"Yes; 'n' die o' fright fir-rst, waitin' 'n' listenin', wi' yer her-rt atween yer teeth! Oi don' loike it, oi say; 'n' oi 'm free to speak my moind, Ed Surriage."

She rose as she concluded, and stepping down the rude flags, looked back over the hill with an anxious eye.

"A plague on 'em! Wher' be they? Tom, Moll, oi say, Hugh, come home wi' ye!"

"Don' bother; Ag 'll bring 'em!"

"Ag 'll bring no young uns home to-night; she 's gone to the tar-rvern."

"T' th' Funtin? What 's goin' on?"

"All along o' this," nodding toward the hill; "foremen 'n' ungineers 'n' them loike, — house full, 'n' them shor-rt-honded. The old negger cook 's dead; Goody Salkins can't budge wi' th' ague; 'n' so th' londlar-rd he come over fur Ag."

"Humph!"

"'N' he said 'f she turns out hondy, he 's loike te need her whoile thet ther' holds out."

"She 's nothin' but a young un yet."

"She 's fifteen a month ago; 'n' it 's toime she took her tur-rn. She 'll be gettin' her meat 'n' drink, 'n' a foive-pun' note at th' end o' th' year. She 'll be better off ther', 'n' we ha' our honds full wi' th' others, never fear. Here, now, comes Job Redden, lookin' fur Ag. Evenin', Job; d' ye see my young uns up ther'?"

The person addressed was a tall, stalwart young man, with a grave and rather heavy face, who came around the corner of the house, from the direction of the hill.

"Not to take note on, oi did n't, Goody Surriage; oi wor lookin' fur Ag."

"She 's helpin' over yonder."

"Th' Funtin?"

"Ay; she 's loike to be ther' awhoile; the're shor-rt-honded these days."

The young man turned and looked towards the little inn with a hesitating air.

"Ye 'll get a wor-rd wi' her when the wor-rk 's done yonder, 'f ye loike to take a tur-rn that way."

"Oi moight take it on the starboard tack, crossin' the sands," he muttered, moving awkwardly away.

"'T is a queer thing, now, ain't it, 't Ag cares not a straw for him, 'n' he tryin' to keep comp'ny wi' her in dead earnest?" said the good dame reflectively, as she watched the lumbering youth across the sands.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW COLLECTOR.

THE old "Bunch of Grapes" tavern in Boston was ablaze with light. From the front windows it streamed across King's Street in a broad white ribbon and lit up with a feeble glare the eastern gable of the Town House. Something unusual was astir in the old hostelry. Guests were arriving in chairs and chaises; and the heavy door swinging open from time to time to admit them, showed in vivid relief against the outer blackness the wistful faces of a knot of idlers hanging about the entrance, straining their ears to catch a stray word from the hum of jocund voices within, and sniffing with eager noses the savory odors from the kitchen.

Within, there was an air of bustle and preparation. Mine host, Joshua Barker, instead of lolling about the tap-room, as was his habit, to receive his guests, was now flying back and forth from the kitchen to the smoke-blackened, oak-panelled supper-room, sharply chiding the servants and giving careful attention to every detail of the coming feast with the anxious air of a man who has a reputation to sustain.

"See ye have on the right napery, — the dambrod pattern, the best Scotch cloths; and make haste wi' ye! Look you to the wines, Hugh! Have no lack;

the Sack first, then the Madeira, — the old brand out of the corner bin, mind ye! Port as much as they want; the best French brandy, a half-dozen bottles. And give me due warning when they 're coming to the punch; I have it brewing. Ha' plenty o' fresh bottles always ready, but don't press the matter! — a' set o' good fellows 'll drink more if they 're not urged. What 's the caster doing there, blockhead? See that the cruets are full. Straighten the platter yonder, Jack; an' look, — look here at the marks o' yer d——d greasy fingers on the glass! Ye 'll ruin my reputation, ye dirty sloven. Here, you, Gregory, run tell the cook to spit the grouse; and bid him, too, to keep the roast basted, and see he boils not the fowls to rags. Get on yer aprons now, ye sluggards, 'n' hark ye ha' yer locks in order 'n' yer hands clean! Stay! Call ye the table ready, and no anchovy sauce on the board, nor the pickled walnuts either? Dick, see you that the clouted cream is cold for the sweetmeats! There goes the hour now; go, bid the cook dish and serve, and get ye to your places! I 'll announce the supper myself."

Hastily adjusting his dress as he loitered through the narrow passage-way, and exchanging with professional skill the flustered and anxious look of the kitchen for his practised publican smile, he flung open the door of the parlor with an obsequious bow and a flourish of his fat hands, crying: —

"Supper is on the board, gentlemen!"

And well might honest Joshua bow and scrape; for, gathered in his little low-studded fore-room, seated in the broad window-seats, basking before the crack-

ling fire, or scuffling about on the sanded floor. were some of the best folks in town, — a picturesque and notable company, with very long heads under their snowy wigs, and stout hearts under their velvet coats and waistcoats of flowered brocade.

There was a lull in the conversation on the landlord's announcement, and all presently filed out two by two in the wake of the waddling host, who ushered them forth, not to an arid expanse of table-cloth and napkins, but to the veritable supper itself, ready and smoking on the board. Finding their places after a little bustle, the company remained standing until the master of ceremonies had handed to the seat on his right the young stranger in whose honor the feast was given. The mere eating lasted an hour or more, when at last the cloth was removed and the company settled back for a general recognition of each other and the purpose of their meeting.

"And now," said the president, after the formal toasts to the King and the Governor had been duly honored, "I give you the guest of the evening. I know you will join me in tendering him a hearty welcome to Boston, where I hope he may find in the novelty of this rude frontier life some compensation for the gay and brilliant society he has left behind."

The stranger rose. He was a young Englishman in the bloom of youth; no 'prentice-made creature of fiction, either, but a veritable son of Adam, whom History claims as her own, and whom Art, as if to keep the finger of Romance quite out of the pie, has handed down to posterity in a portrait thus described by a sober historian: "A refined and noble cast of features,

with a peculiarly pensive and melancholy expression. The countenance and dress indicate a certain indefinable sweetness of temper and delicacy of taste." History, however, says nothing about the ease and grace of manner with which he now acknowledged Mr. Cushing's toast and the accompanying applause.

"Gentlemen," he said, bowing, "you do me great honor. I confess I was not at all prepared for the elegance of the hospitality or the cordiality of the greeting with which I have been met. And I trust it is not presumption in me to add, that among the smiling and friendly faces around me I detect such good material for companionship that I am not likely long to miss that left behind. Gentlemen, I have the honor of giving you the glory and prosperity of Boston!"

This was greeted with a roar of applause, and the whole company drank the toast standing.

"'T is meet now," continued the president, drawing a note from his pocket, "although our gathering here is simply to give an informal welcome to Mr. Frankland, that I should express to you the regrets of his Excellency at not being able to be present."

"His Excellency is most kind," returned Frankland after the reading of the note; "and if I may be permitted to name the next toast —"

"Go on! Go on!" chorused the table.

"It will be William Shirley, the man — not the governor."

"'T is a pity," said Mr. Cradock, who sat near by, "his Excellency should miss such a tribute from his rival."

Frankland turned an inquiring look upon the speaker, who added, smiling: —

"Oh, we have heard a whisper of that matter over here."

"May one ask what matter is that?" inquired Overing.

"How Divine Providence saved your province from a dire calamity," returned Frankland, laughing.

"It hath saved us from so many," said Mr. Quincy, "that 't is blind guessing — "

"Nay, you shall not tempt me to blab State secrets."

"What is already so far let slip cannot be kept close," urged Mr. Wendell; "besides, we are all safe here."

"Ay, let us have it, sir," pleaded Mr. Vassall, drawing up his chair to more confidential proximity.

"'T is nothing," began Frankland, warmed to the point of incaution by the wine already drunk; "but, under the rose, I don't mind telling you, for 't is rather a good joke after all."

"Stay! not over an empty bottle," interposed the chairman.

"I see I am not to lack encouragement," returned the Englishman, sipping his replenished glass; "but, touching this story you are waiting for, I hardly know how to begin. The long and the short of it is, my dear friends, you had a narrow escape of having for your governor no less a person than" — he paused and reddened with a sudden touch of diffidence — "your very obedient, humble servant."

An exclamation of surprise ran around the table.

"As a mere makeshift, of course," he hastened to add, deprecatingly. "Pray do not suppose I have the vanity to flatter myself it was for any fitness; but you must know the Government was in a sad quandary. Such a pother had been made in ousting the former incumbent, Mr. —"

"Belcher," suggested Vassall.

"And so many idle scandals had been started about his opposition to the Land Bank, and his conspiracy with my good friend Mr. Commissary Price, and what not, that — Why, to tell you the plain truth, gentlemen, there was rather a dearth of candidates for the place."

A grim smile illuminated for a moment Mr. Quincy's face, and he turned to make an aside remark to his neighbor Wendell, which politeness perhaps repressed.

"Drolly enough," continued Mr. Frankland, "it chanced that Mrs. Shirley, who, as you all know, is a vastly clever woman, and with considerable family influence too, was in London just at the moment to secure for her husband a certain position which —"

"Is now much more acceptably filled," blurted out Overing.

"Tut, tut; that 's carrying politeness too far, and smacks of treason besides. No, no; the simple truth is, I was first in the field and knew nothing of Madam Frances's hunt until I was committed as a candidate; and then, as I was there in person, and moreover had strong backing at Court, why, the upshot of it was, gentlemen, you owe it to me that you have so able and excellent a governor."

"Yes, yes; but no doubt his Excellency would have preferred the Collectorship," said some one.

"And for very substantial reasons," added another.

"As well enough he might, with his big brood of children," remarked Mr. Hutchinson, gravely. "But to change the subject for a moment; pray tell us, sir, — you who are so fresh from the centre of affairs, — what are the prospects for the coming session?"

"Why, sir, for the moment the Whigs are under. 'T was plain enough what would happen when I left home. The change, as you know, took place during my transit hither. For myself, as I was appointed by the old administration, I am under no obligation to the new. They are welcome to my humble post here as soon as they choose to demand it. Meantime I make bold to say, gentlemen, that in my opinion this compromise cabinet will hardly survive its organization."

"Why not?" asked Cushing, bluntly.

"It has no fibre, no adhesiveness; 't will go to pieces like a rope of sand the moment the reason for its feeble being ceases."

"And that was opposition to Walpole, I suppose," suggested Hutchinson, shrewdly.

"Nothing else; by that one slender thread are bound all the jarring factions of the Coalition, — patriots (so called), Jacobites, and Tories. 'T was all well enough so long as they were of like mind and going the same way; but once let them begin — as they soon must — to scratch and claw each other, and how long, *think you*, will it hold?"

"It has held long enough already to do irreparable mischief," said Mr. Quincy, significantly.

"You mean the overthrow of Sir Robert?"

Quincy simply nodded. Frankland took the hint directly; the discussion was plainly ill-timed, and he had been indiscreet. He sipped his wine and adroitly restored the social tone to the meeting by a change of subject.

"But a truce to politics, gentlemen. There is one toast we have not yet honored, and I take the blame to myself."

"Fill up! Fill up!" The word flew around the table as the bottle passed from hand to hand.

"Now," said the president, lifting his replenished glass, "for your toast, Mr. Frankland."

"Here, then, is to the ladies!"

"Hear! Hear!"

"The ladies of Boston, both young and old! if they prove but half as amiable as their fathers and brothers, I shall have found here in the wilderness *The New Atlantis*."

"Bravo!" cried the chairman, as all responded to the toast; "and now which of all you tuneful gentlemen is to favor us with a song? Come, Mr. Whalley, you look obliging!"

The young gentleman called upon, after due hemming and hawing, rattled off to a taking little air the following words: —

"Cease your funning;
Force or cunning
Never shall my heart trepan.
All these sallies
Are but malice
To seduce my constant man.

'T is most certain
By their flirting
Women oft have envy shown;
Pleased to ruin
Others' wooing,
Never happy in their own."

"Capital!" cried Frankland, keeping time with a spoon upon the rim of his glass. "I never thought to have heard the 'Beggar's Opera' so far from home."

"You know it, then?" asked the singer.

"Yes; and knew its author too, when he was in the flesh. Lucky man! he made fame and fortune out of the piece, and well he deserved all, — the most fascinating, engaging creature in the world. Old Dean Swift, savage as he is, doted on him, and Pope too, who is a bunch of venom himself. But to my thinking, a song should have a chorus —"

"A chorus! A chorus!" echoed the company.

"Nay; but, gentlemen —"

"Fairly caught, Mr. Frankland," laughed the president; "there 's no escape for you!"

"Well, then, I 'll try — 't will be but a trial, mind! — a bit of a ballad by Harry Fielding, whose health I give you here and now; a man crammed with genius, one of the first wits of the age, and, I am proud to say, my very good friend."

Clearing his throat after the toast had been honored, the young gentleman in a remarkably tuneful voice favored the company with the spirited old ballad: —

"The dusky night rides down the sky
And ushers in the morn;
The hounds all join in a glorious cry,
The hounds all join in a glorious cry,
The huntsman winds his horn,
The huntsman winds his horn."

The company lustily joined in the chorus at the end of every stanza, until the very rafters rung.

"Sh-h! Listen!" cried some one, holding up his finger.

"One — o-n-e — o-n-e o'-cl-o-c-k; a fair clear night, and all 's wel-l-l-l!" came echoing down the silent street.

"'One!' Humph! the night wears on," said the president. "'T is time for the punch. Where 's Barker?"

"Barker — Barker!" roared the whole table.

"Here, here, gentlemen!"

"The arrack!"

"All ready; ready and waiting, gentlemen," answered the watchful landlord. "You shall have it in a twinkling."

As good as his word, the worthy Joshua directly reappeared with a huge bowl of fragrant punch, followed by a servant with a tray of fresh glasses.

Hereupon the elder and more sedate part of the company, after due exchange of compliments, prudently withdrew, and the younger and more reckless gave themselves up to unrestrained revelry. Toasts

and songs followed in unnoted succession, until some one with stentorian voice struck up an old English air, the chorus of which so captivated the company that the singer was not allowed to get beyond the first stanza: —

> "In smiling Bacchus' joys I 'll roll,
> Deny no pleasure to my soul !
> Let Bacchus' health round briskly move,
> For Bacchus is a friend to Love!
> And he that will this health deny,
> Down among the dead men let him lie!"

Great variety was given to the rendering of the chorus; thus (*pianissimo*), "Down among the dead men, down among the dead men. Down — down (*crescendo*), down — down (*fortissimo*) among the dead men let him lie!"

Inspired by the insidious arrack, they roared out this refrain again and again, hoarsely, shrilly, in tune and out of tune, but with ever increasing vigor as they pounded the table with their broken glasses, as they rose and marched about it, as they boozily embraced each other, vowing eternal esteem to Mr. Frankland, welcoming him to Boston, assuring him he was the best collector ever heard of in history, etc.

And so forth they went with uncertain steps into the sober, sleeping town, each preceded by a servant with a lantern, waking the shocked echoes of the silent streets with untimely revelry.

Nay, three or four of the younger and more hospitable insisted upon seeing their guest home to his

lodgings across the Mill-creek, making the purlieus of North Square ring, as they returned, with the bacchanalian strains of

> "Down — down — down —
> Down among the dead men let him lie!"

CHAPTER III.

AGNES.

NEXT morning, as it chanced, Mr. Commissary Price started out on a round of calls. They were not to be parochial calls, for his brows were knitted, and his lips pregnant with a purely mundane purpose. Unlucky in finding his wealthy parishioner Mr. Peter Faneuil "not at home," and his Excellency the Governor "engaged with some New York commissioners on military affairs," he paused a moment coming down the Province House steps and consulted a little memorandum which he drew from his pocket.

"No; yes — why not?" he muttered, and buttoning his cassock snugly about him, proceeded around into Queen Street, and dropped in at the Custom House.

The young collector, with his fresh English complexion a little blanched from last night's dissipation, was already seated at his desk busily poring over a rude map of the provincial seaboard. He greeted his visitor with a heartiness that showed the two were already friends.

"Good! I'm glad to see that," cried the Commissary, pointing to the map. "Studying the geography of your new home, I suppose?"

"Yes. I was looking up the two or three places I am like to have business relations with," returned Frankland, tossing down the map and placing a chair.

"Egad! I wish our friends at home would follow your example. As it is, they've a clearer notion of purgatory than of the colonies. But how are you coming on in your new berth here?" asked the Commissary, settling himself for a talk.

"Swimmingly, thus far," answered the Collector, proceeding naturally enough with a description of the banquet given him by the merchants the night before. The note of enthusiasm in his account evidently grated on the elder's ear.

"Ay, ay; no doubt," he said testily. "They're well enough so long as they're suffered to go their own gait; but draw the rein on them never so little, and a more cantankerous set was never begotten."

"But," protested the Collector, "I never had handsomer treatment in my life, I give you my word."

"To be sure; they're on their good behavior for the nonce. After scheming and plotting and wrangling for months, they've gained their point, and got poor Belcher and the old Collector ousted. Now you and his Excellency come in — a new administration — as a sop thrown to this snarling Puritan Cerberus, and no wonder he wags his tail."

"Yes, but 'tis not alone the official compliment; 't is the cordiality which — "

"Poh, poh! why should n't they be cordial? They've drawn a prize. Instead of a vulgar and crabbed old martinet, who would have cracked the official whip over them as they deserve, they have

secured for their Collector a young man of rank, wealth, talents, — to say nothing of good looks, good breeding — "

"Hold, hold! I cry you mercy!"

"Fudge! I would n't condescend to bandy compliments; I merely state the case. Hang 'em! I say; they deserve no such good luck. You 're a pearl, my dear sir, — however little you suspect it, — cast before swine."

"Ah, well! I suppose you have grievances to forgive; but for me, so long as they receive me in this humor I cannot but show myself friendly."

"Oh, as friendly as you like; but," continued the Commissary, nodding his head emphatically, and tapping Frankland on the knee, as if to mark each word *staccato*, "have a care! Do not expect this state of things to last. Run counter to them once, and you 'll find these same fair-spoken merchants of Boston the most sly, cunning, treacherous, cavilling set of devils on the face of the earth."

"Very well; I 'll wait for developments. Meantime, there is the law, which we must both obey. I am sent here as his Majesty's Collector of the Customs, and they must know I 'm bound to do my duty."

Squinting up his cool eyes, the astute clergyman studied his young friend's face for a moment, and then broke into a low, cynical laugh, none the less effective that it was entirely forced.

"You 'd better send home, then, for a man-of-war and a regiment of red-coats as soon as may be."

"So I will, when I need them," returned Frankland, rather dryly.

"Hark ye, my dear sir," persisted the Commissary, disregarding the tone; "you come out here to this wild desert consigned to my spiritual care. I adopt you as a friend. My interest in you will not suffer itself to be narrowed down to the mere saving of your soul. I must look out for your worldly welfare. Let us be frank, then. You say — and forgive me for thinking you really believe it — that you 're sent hither to collect his Majesty's Customs; I say — and I know what I 'm talking about too — you 're sent to do nothing of the sort!"

"Hoity-toity! Upon my word, sir —"

"Tut, tut! You are never such a babe in arms as you would have one think. You have come hither precisely as your predecessors did, — to collect what you can get, which, if it be a moiety of what 's due, you may have my new wig to stuff a footstool."

"Why," confessed the young official, unwilling on the one hand to be thought unsophisticated, and on the other fearful of being too confidential with his outspoken visitor, "I — I have heard hints of such a state of affairs; but —"

"'Hints'! 't is whispering business no longer. You will see constant and impudent evasion of the law going on under your very nose, which, if you are shrewd, and wish to be successful in your office, you will affect not to notice."

"Better make known at once, then, that violations of the law will be disregarded."

"Not at all; for where they become too flagrant to be winked at, you must wake up and come down on 'em; but to the covert, systematic, and organized

thieving of these respectable meeting-house saints you must, I charge you, be as blind as a bat. Meantime, fail not to go to their banquets, eat their dinners, drink their wines, and make love to their daughters."

"Ah," exclaimed Frankland, in a tone of relief for a promised change of subject, "I seem not likely to be allowed to show my accomplishments in that direction."

"Never fear! Never fear! that will come in time; but you, that have been used to the gay and obliging beauties of the court and metropolis, will not find these prudish misses much to your mind, I fancy."

"Who knows?" exclaimed the young man, laughing, as his visitor rose to go. "One may meet his fate anywhere."

"Meantime," continued the Commissary, carefully fitting on his gloves, "here 's a final bit of advice for you. If you want at once to satisfy the Home Government of your zeal, and make capital with the worthy Bostoneers, let your first work be to break up these nests of pirates and smugglers that infest the coast. They 're safe prey, — this vulgar sort; they have no social standing, go to no prayer-meetings, own no pews. By the bye, speaking of pews," he continued, as if with a sudden suggestion, "let me advise you to get out of that one of yours."

"Why so?" asked Frankland, curiously.

"Wait until the next storm and you 'll have no occasion to ask. There 's a leak just above you in the roof you may see daylight through."

"Why, then I'll call upon the vestrymen to stop it."

"'Stop it'! My dear sir, where's the use of stopping one hole in a sieve? It's all of a piece, — the whole building; 'tis nothing but a shell. You should be with me in the chancel of a rainy day; I stand in a perfect shower."

"Why, then, do they not pull down the old church and build a new one?"

"Just what I've tired myself out asking the vestrymen. Egad! they take it as a kind of riddle, a pleasantry on my part, to be answered by a quip or a quirk, as Heaven sends them wit. Meantime the old trap needs but a breath of encouragement from a northeast gale to tumble about their ears."

"But there are men of substance enough in the congregation."

"Indeed are there!"

"Then why do they not — "

"'Why?' Because they're afraid of seeming too officious, mind you, in the Lord's business. I'm tempted to tuck an extra clause into the litany, — 'From too much reverence, good Lord, deliver us,' — as I now add a tag to my daily prayer, that some brisk young fellow will come along with something besides lip-zeal for the Church, to shame these laggards into moving in the matter. Look at those stiff-necked Puritans! See how they squander money on their uncouth meeting-houses, while the true Church — the real old apostolic established Church — is represented in this rich and flourishing town by a rotten

old shed that would n't afford fit shelter for cattle. 'T is a crying scandal ! "

"'Tis, sir; 'tis indeed!" cried Frankland, warmly. "I 'm shocked at such apathy. I 'm but a newcomer; but if you think I could do anything — "

"'Do anything!'" cried the watchful Commissary, catching at the suggestion. "Once get a subscription paper started, with a round sum at the head, and the thing is done. I 'll take good care, never fear, that the project does not perish still-born; they dare not hold back when once the ball 's set rolling."

"Count on me, then; I 'll move in the matter at once."

"And I — trust me! — will requite your pains. You shall be chosen of the board, and" — searching his mind for a more tempting inducement — "I 'll secure you the snuggest dowry in the province for a match."

"Make haste," said Frankland, laughing and shaking hands, "or I may content myself with some humbler prize."

The Commissary went away with relaxed lip and forehead, as well he might after having neatly despatched a delicate business. The Collector meanwhile, quite unsuspicious of having been dexterously used to further one of his parson's pet projects, occupied himself with a suggestion let drop by the latter, which, being confirmatory of certain hints from other sources, seemed worthy attention.

Returning with renewed interest to the study of his map, he consulted, in connection with it, certain official reports which he drew from the files in his

office. As a result of this study, prompted perhaps in the first instance by the Commissary's suggestion, he set out, several days afterwards, upon a journey along the northern shore of the bay. Chief upon his list of places to be visited, as it chanced, was the thriving little port of Marblehead.

It was towards sundown on a fine day in June that he went riding into the town. Mounted on a blooded horse, attended by a servant in livery, and dressed after the latest London fashion, he naturally created a sensation. Diving unsuspectingly into the blind labyrinth of crooked streets, and coming out, after a roundabout course of twenty minutes or more, at the exact point of starting, he stopped, and mentally rehearsed several stock phrases of profanity.

"Here, my lad," he cried to a ragged boy who stood regarding him in goggle-eyed astonishment from a neighboring corner, "can you tell me the way to the inn?"

"Yeah, can oi; g' down ther' by Skipper-r Pennel's, 'n' go off on th' lorboard tack till ye come to Moll Pitcher's; 'n' ther' ye 'll see 't stret to leeward."

Tossing the amazed urchin a shilling, Frankland followed the given directions, and soon drew up in front of a squat, unpainted, wooden building overlooking the water. On a swinging sign above the door he read in faded letters the name of the little hostelry.

"'The Fountain!'" he exclaimed, smiling. "O haunt of the muses, refuge of wits, and home of the

convivial and immortal Kit-Kats! has your fame indeed reached across the broad Atlantic and taken root in this out-of-the-way corner? 'T is a good omen, though," he concluded, throwing the rein to his servant and slipping lightly to the ground. "Fate must have guided my steps to this namesake of my old London retreat."

Turning by chance upon the doorstep, he uttered an exclamation at the miraculous beauty of the outlook. Just below him nestled the tiny inlet of Little Harbor, shut in by the rocky spur on which stood the uncompleted fort. Beyond lay the larger harbor with its "beckoning finger;" while, outlying all, spread the peaceful waters of the bay, coruscating with the sunset splendor tossed back and forth from sea to sky. Near and far, Nature had been lavish. The shabby little inn was but the foil in a picture. Massed against it on the right like drifted snow-banks, swung the top-heavy branches of an apple-orchard, now laden with June blossoms. In front, a little greensward spangled with dandelions stretched away to the rocks.

With a sensuous sigh, as if oppressed with such a feast of beauty, Frankland at length turned and entered the house. Inside, it was after the common pattern: a broad, low-studded hall, with doors opening to the right upon a common tap-room, and to the left upon a small fore-room roughly fitted with heavy oaken furniture.

Peeping into either room without finding anybody, the traveller at last called out to a servant-maid on her knees scrubbing the stairs: —

"Tell me, my good lass, where are the people of the house?"

Turning and catching a glimpse of the speaker, the girl rose, and gazed at him in dumb amazement.

"What's the matter with the girl? Don't you hear me?" repeated the young man, going nearer. "Where is the landlord, I say?" he cried, facing her for the first time.

Now, in turn, he paused, slowly exhaling a suspended breath. The two stood mutely face to face, each a distinct revelation to the other. The overawed maiden stared with Miranda-like wonder at this being of another order, with his white, jewelled hands, his rich dress, and — most astounding and superhuman of all — his air of high breeding and refinement. Frankland, on his part, discovered with scarcely less amazement in the dirty and ill-conditioned kitchen-wench one of the most striking and perfect types of female beauty he had ever beheld, —. a figure just budding into womanhood, combining the vigor and suppleness of perfect health with a subtle grace which lurked in every muscle and sinew, from the dishevelled head to the naked feet and ankles, all splashed as they were with foul water from the slop-bucket; a face of historic beauty, lighted up by bright, full, black eyes instinct with passion, gazing forth with ingenuous candor from the tangled masses of dark hair which overhung her low forehead.

In a softer tone the young man repeated his question.

"'The londlar-rd'!" echoed the girl, in a rich alto; "he 's yonder in the bor-rn."

"Call the landlady, then. She will do as well."

"Goody Salkins!" mechanically answered the girl, while her absorbed attention remained fixed on the amazing personage before her.

"Yes, anybody."

"She 'd never heed ye. She could not budge, the poor dame, wi' the ague."

"Where 's the barmaid, then, — the boots, the ostler?"

"Oi clean th' boots, what ther' be," she said, gazing critically at his immaculate top-boots; "'n' oi 'll draw ye a mug o' ale, 'f ye want."

"No; never mind, thank you. And so," continued the young man, with an amused look, "you are the landlady, then, the barmaid, boots, ostler, — in fine, the whole force. And what may your name be, my pretty lass?"

Recalled to self-consciousness by this direct personal remark, the girl dropped her eyes bashfully as she answered, —

"'Ag,' they call me."

"That 's for Agnes?"

"Ay; but 't is only the minister calls it so," she replied, sidling slowly away towards her abandoned slop-bucket.

"Well, Agnes," continued the capricious traveller, with the possible intent of prolonging the interview, "I 'm thinking I 'll change my mind about the ale. You may draw me a mug, after all, if you will."

The call for service at once restored the embarrassed servant-maid to ease. Dropping her scrubbing-brush, she proceeded directly on her errand.

Frankland, meanwhile, improved the opportunity to saunter into the little fore-room and seat himself at the window. Agnes, returning presently with the ale, approached him coyly and held out the foaming mug at arm's length. He affected not to see it.

"Ther' 't is for ye!"

"Ah, yes," he said, taking it carelessly and turning back to the window. "So this is the Fountain, — the best inn in town, I suppose?"

"Good or bad, ther's none other!" she answered, making a movement towards the door.

"And how long have you been here, Agnes?" he went on, still intent on the window.

"It 's not two months gone yet," she replied, pausing on her heel, unable to resist the temptation to study his averted face.

"Where were you before that?"

"Nowher', oi wor n't."

"'Nowhere'?"

"Only home wi' my mother."

"And does your mother live hereabouts?"

"Close by. Yonder ye may see 't, 'cross the cove."

"'Across the cove'?" he muttered with affected stupidity. "I do not make it out."

"Why, roight ther' 't is; just over the sands. See?" she exclaimed, forgetting for the moment her awe of the grand stranger, and pressing close up beside him in the narrow window-seat in her eagerness to point out the house.

"Ah, yes, the little cottage, I see. And do you

like living here better than at home?" he asked, stealing a glance at the intent face now close to his own.

"It 's willy nilly oi come, an' willy nilly oi stay; oi ha' no complaints to make."

Becoming suddenly conscious of the penetrating blue eyes gazing closely into her own, and seeing her own soiled and shabby garments in contact with the elegant dress of the stranger, she started up and quickly retreated from the window.

"Stay, my good lass," he said kindly; "I have something to say to you."

He paused, forgetful of his intent, in admiration of the girl's figure as she stood there with the expression of a startled bird, the rich fringe of her downcast lashes shading her sunburnt cheek, an air of arrested flight so vividly expressed in every limb that if suddenly petrified it might well have befitted a Diana of the Bath.

The spell was rudely broken by a footstep on the outer threshold.

"Ther's th' Londlar-rd fur ye!" she cried, with an air of relief; and directly afterwards a common-looking man entered the room, who, at sight of so distinguished a guest, began straightway pouring forth profuse apologies for his neglect. Agnes seized the opportunity to escape from the room.

Whatever the business was that called Frankland to Marblehead, he kept his own counsel. Asking no questions at the inn, he went away alone directly after supper, and did not return until late at night. In vain Goodman Salkins marvelled as to the nature

of the errand which could bring so unusual a visitor to his humble house, in vain talked it over with his gossips, in vain cross-examined the stranger's servant; honest Sambo was as ignorant as himself. And so the baffled landlord was fain to console himself with the reflection that the mystery, if mystery there were, must sooner or later come out, and nobody in town was likely to have earlier intelligence of it than himself.

Early next morning Frankland was awakened by the deafening clamor of the song-birds; robins, bluebirds, orioles, bubbling bobolinks, and whistling quails made up the morning chorus. Suddenly in the midst of the medley arose a fresh, clear human voice singing a snatch of an old ballad. A connoisseur in music, Frankland listened with delight. He was like a lapidary unexpectedly coming upon a rare gem. Jumping up, he ran to the window. The singer had stopped. Nobody was to be seen. Presently, down the path leading from the fountain whence the little inn took its name, came tripping a lithesome figure. It was Agnes. Just as Frankland caught sight of her, she stopped to chaff with a passing gossip, — a bumpkin with a pail of milk. He could not hear their words, but the gay, free tones of her voice came floating up to the window where he stood peeping behind the curtains. Presently, letting fly a parting sally at the admiring youth, she caught up the heavy wooden bucket filled with water, and swung it round and round her head without spilling a drop. The indescribable grace of her whirling figure, the early sunbeams glinting in a

golden shower through the trees, and the white petals of the apple-blossoms falling all about, formed a picture which the bumpkin, in an unwary moment, strove to reproduce.

Uplifting his bucket of milk, he swung it around once or twice, loudly challenging her attention. His triumph was short-lived. The bail of the bucket broke in mid-air, and the milk came streaming down upon him in a drenching shower.

There was a moment's pause. Agnes stopped, as if to catch her breath, and then burst forth into irrepressible laughter. Peal after peal it came bubbling and gurgling from her throat like struggling water from a bottle. Frankland looked on at first with scarcely a smile. It was not a subject to stir a finer sense of mirth. But a finer sense of mirth would have been incapable of so deep-going a convulsion, in which body and soul were alike given over to mirth's victorious control. The laughter of the girl was catching and irresistible. It was the laugh of one rarely moved, and then to the depths. Frankland astonished himself presently by laughing aloud out of pure sympathy.

Meantime the rueful face of the youth when he realized his mishap, his angry grumblings as he mopped his face, brought on fresh accessions of mirth in the poor girl, who gasped, and choked, and wiped her streaming eyes as she leaned against a tree in utter abandonment.

A sharp summons from the house put an end to the scene. Recalled to her neglected duties, Agnes caught up her bucket and stammered out some in-

articulate condolence to the sulky youth as she hurried away.

The song and the laughter, or both together, would seem to have made an unusual impression upon the pensive young Englishman. Casting about, as he dressed, for some pretext of getting speech again with the beautiful kitchen-wench, he bethought him of sending down his boots to be cleaned. As he expected, she brought them back.

"And who taught you to sing, Agnes?"

"Nobody has lor-rned me; oi could always sing. 'T is gold, this?" she concluded, staring fixedly at the coin in her hand.

"Yes, a guinea."

"Oi 'm to take 't to th' londlar-rd?"

"No; you are to keep it yourself!"

"Oi!" she gasped in amazement.

"Yes; 't is to buy you some shoes."

Glancing down at her bare feet with a deep blush, she straightway withdrew them within the protecting shadow of her petticoat.

"Oi know not what to say to ye," she faltered.

"Say nothing at all, then."

"Shall ye ever-r come hither-r again?"

"Would you like to have me come again?" he asked, with a look of interest.

"Oi — oi —" She stopped and blushed.

"You do not care."

"Thet oi do! Oi wish ye moight, wi' all my her-rt!" she cried, and fled like a fawn down the stairs.

CHAPTER IV.

JOB REDDEN.

NEXT Lord's Day, as noontide approached, a group of idle young men gathered around the porch of Parson Holyoke's little meeting-house. Nothing would have induced one of them to cross the threshold and assist at the service within; for by such an act he would have lost caste forever among his associates. The good parson, of course, was unsparing in his denunciation of such backsliding; for most of these loungers had been in younger days members of his congregation, who had graduated after their first trip "to the Banks." Vain, however, were his reproaches, vain his entreaties, vain his terrible and realistic pictures of the consequences of such contumacy at the judgment-day; the sturdy young fishermen continued to brave his wrath and the elders' disapproving glare, and limited their attendance to the vestibule, where, however, be it said, they failed not to appear as regularly as the week rolled around.

The meeting-house vestibule was naturally enough the social exchange of the town, where everybody stopped to have a chat with his neighbor, to ask after the sick and absent, to talk over the crops and

fishing, the births and deaths, — in fine, the comedy and tragedy of the week.

The young girls, after the fashion of their elders, gathered in a group apart, chattering of their lesser interests in studied unconsciousness of the young men loitering near, who each, however, after his own, clumsy and sheepish manner, in the course of a few minutes sidled up and joined the merry party. As silently and gradually as it had been formed, the little group began presently to fall apart and melt away, as if through the operation of some mysterious chemical action whereby each particle masculine or feminine had found its affinity.

"Come," said Job Redden to Agnes; "we moight better-r be walkin' loike th' others."

"No, oi 'll be wanted yonder-r; 't is past noon."

"What motter-r!"

"Th' londlar-rd 'll be lookin' out fur me; ther 's all them for-rt folk to dinner, 'n' oi 've the table to spread."

"D——n th' for-rt folk! Come, ye 've toime fur a bit o' a tur-rn in the berryin-grun."

"Indeed, but oi ha' not."

"'Cause ye will not, that 's a'. Ye 've ever an excuse at th' end o' yer tongue. Speak out, 'n' say ye don't want 'er, 'n' ha' done with 't!"

"Oi don't want 'er, then, ther' now!" retorted the girl, with a mischievous sideway glance at his face.

"Oi worrnt ye 're ready eno' fur gibin'."

"Oi 'm ready fur nothin' o' th' sort."

"Come, then, fur a tur-rn down to th' willow yonder by Goody Lattimore's grave! Ye 'll not be

wanted this half-hour at th' Funtain. Londlar-rd Salkins was feather-rin' the chickens in the shed as oi come along."

"Ye shall bear the blame 'f oi 'm berated, moind," she said, yielding at length, with a proper show of reluctance. "But — ugh! oi don't need holdin' so toight, mon, oi can stond up by myself."

"Ay, ye 're so grond wi' yer new shoes. Ye must get gret pay at th' tor-rvern."

"Oi should wait a gret whoile fur-r shoes out o' my pay yonder-r."

"Eh — yer say?"

"A foive-pun' note at th' end o' th' year-r 'n' not a penny th' whoile."

"An' so th' old mon 's been raisin' the wind?"

"For-rther? No, he 's not, nuther-r."

"Wher' then?"

"A present they wor, 'n' that 's wher'."

"Th' londlar-rd?"

"No, no, no, not he it wor-r n't; ha, ha!" laughed the girl with delight; "ye 're freezin' now."

"Oi 'm not loike to get war-rmer at puzzlin'."

"Well, then, — but ye must promise never to tell."

"Ay, ay!"

"'T wor the grondest mon ever oi saw, wi' th' foinest clothes, 'n' silk stockin's, 'n' lace at his throat, n' honds whoiter 'n a lady's, covered wi' rings."

"Pf-f-f! 'n' so thet 's the koind o' a popinjay ye ca' foine?"

"An' so he was; a big lor-rd or somethin' o' thet sor-rt, ye may be sure, for he had a grond way wi' him, 'n' the most be-eautiful face ye ever saw."

"Oh, oi worrnt him; 'n' what was this hoigh 'n' moighty lor-rd doin' at th' Funtin tor-rvern?"

"Why, thet's it; nobody knows, — th' londlar-rd no more 'n the rest; he wor n't of the koind that tell the'r business to ev'rybody chonces to come along."

"Thet oi 'll engage; 'n' 't wor no honest business, ye may be sure. But how hoppens this peacock to be givin' shoes t' Ag Surriage? thet's what oi want to know."

"Oi never-r said he give shoes."

"Eh! Ha' ye th' face to deny — "

"No, no; not shoes, but money; gold, — a broight gold piece. Oi cleaned his boots — ther' were no dir-rt on 'em more 'n moine this minute; 'n' when oi took 'em up, he — he — spoke so koind, 'n' — 'n' — "

"'N' what?" demanded Job, savagely.

"'N' gave me this gold piece, 'n' patted me under the chin wi' his soft hond," continued Agnes, with a bright blush.

"He did, did he," sneered Job; "tur-rn ye round here, since ye 're so fond o't, 'n' oi 'll chuck ye under th' chin to yer her-rt's content!"

"Go away ther' now; ye 're hur-rtin' me!"

"'N' what more did he say?"

"He said oi had a foine voice, 'n' 't wor a pity oi 'd no teachin'; 'n' then he — he asked me where wor my shoes."

"What domned business was it o' his, oi 'd loike to know?"

"'N' when oi said oi had none —" continued Agnes, absorbed in her reminiscence or reckless of the effect she was producing.

"Wha' th' devil's name d' ye say that fur?"

"Wud ye ha' me tell him a loi?"

"Ay, wud oi; tell him onything; the truth's too good fur that sor-rt."

"'N' so he made me take the gold piece, 'n' oi bought the shoes 'n' this bit o' ribbon at my neck besoide; ye did n't look at it!"

"Oi ha' somethin' better to do, 'n' so ha' you. But ye 're forgettin' yer haste all o' a sudden!"

"Ay, but oi 'll not forget it soon again, oi worrnt ye. Oi 'll not be in a haste soon again to come walk-in' wi' you in the berryin'-gr-run, Job Redden."

"No doubt, no doubt, ye 'd be glad to be rid o' me; oi dare swear ye wud. But oi ha' somethin' still to say to ye, Ag."

"Why don't ye say it, then? Who 's hind'rin' ye?"

"'T is not to be said in a breath; oi ha' no toime now, nor you, nuther. Oi moight come after ye when oi go to-night for bait, 'f yer head wor n't so full o' yer foine popinjay 't ye could n't listen to common sense."

"Ef ye call blamin' 'n' abuse common sense, oi ha' hed eno' o't a'ready; oi 'm free to say thet, Job Redden."

"Oi 'll speak my moind wherever oi am; an ye don't loike it, ye know what ye can do."

"Thet oi do, 'n' ye can go for bait by yerself, 'n' speak out yer moind to yer fish, since yer so fond o't; so ther' now."

"Go yer ways for a puffed-up hussy!" exclaimed the discomfited Job, looking after the indignant girl as without a look or a nod she turned off on the wind-

ing road that led to the tavern and left her lover to his own reflections.

Notwithstanding this quarrel at midday, however, Agnes betrayed no surprise to see Job turn up as usual in the evening, as she sat on the broad stone step at the kitchen door watching the sunset glow fade from the eastern sky.

"So here ye be," he began; "oi ha' been waitin' fur ye down at the w'āarf."

"What call had ye to wait for me?"

"To go fur th' bait; ye know well enough. Come, are ye ready?"

"No, oi 'm not ready, 'n' oi 've no thought o' goin', nuther."

"Come, budge now; don't be a dunce. Oi ha' come fur ye, 'n' ye see oi forgive ye what ye said to me at par-rtin'."

"Ye ha' been aforehond wi' me, then."

"What ye dr-rivin' at now?"

"Oi 've a little motter o' forgivin' o' my own to do."

"Fudge! Ha' oi not come fur ye? It 's not fur a chicken loike you to begin storin' up grudges."

"Oi 'm toired o' bein' huff'd 'n' ding'd about, 'n' oi ha' told ye that afore."

"Make no more wor-rds about it; oi 'm sorry oi moddened ye. What more 's to be said? Come, come now!"

"Th' londlar-rd moight n't loike it."

"Ther' he 's yonder at th' bor-rn then; go ask him!" concluded Job, turning away as if it were all settled; "'n' oi 'll go get th' oars."

He was not mistaken. Whether Agnes was not seriously offended at her plain-spoken admirer, or whether she thought she had punished him enough already, does not appear. The fact only remains that five minutes afterwards she came scrambling down the rocks in front of the tavern, and, undeterred by the rank smell, by the dirty seats covered with fish-scales, the bait-knives and offal-buckets, seated herself in the boat and took up the tiller, while Job pushed off, and with long vigorous strokes sent the boat speeding over the quiet water.

"Oi did n't tell ye th' bāargain oi hed, Ag," he began after a little. "This boat — it 's moine; oi ha' bought it, — the foinest un in th' cove, 't is."

"Ay, 't is a foine un enough," returned Agnes, looking critically at the little craft.

"By 'n' by, after oi ha' been to th' Banks a hāaf-score toimes more, we 'll ha' mayhap a schooner o' our own too, — yer 'n' oi."

"Oi?"

"Ay, when we set up, — th' very foinest schooner in the harbor 't 'll be."

"Who talks o' settin' up?"

"Oi do."

"Oi 'll mayhap ha' a wor-rd to say to thet myself."

"Ye 'll ha' but one wor-rd to say, 'n' thet 's 'Ay'."

"Oi 'm loike to wait till oi 'm asked fir-rst, 'n' never fear but oi 'll speak my moind."

"Ye 've been speakin' yer moind this twel-month past; an ye had any other moind, 't was toime 't came out long ago."

"Oi 'm not goin' to be told what oi 'll say or when oi 'll say it, nuther. Oi 'm not loike to say Ay or No to a question till oi 'm asked it."

"Ha' oi not been courtin' ye ever since oi wor' a cut-tail?"

"An ye ha', what then?"

"Ye had no roight to come wi' me an ye meant not to come wi' me fur good."

"'N' when did oi not make trouble eno' about goin' with ye, 'n' said 'No, no, no,' till oi was toired sayin' 't, 'n' ye wud never take no for answer, but must ever be dr-roggin' me after ye loike a dog wi' a string?"

"Ye need not ha' come an ye had not wished."

"'Need not' is easy to say; but wher' was my help when ye squaled me up loike a cat wud a kitten?"

The conversation was here interrupted by their arrival at the nets, where Job was busily engaged for a quarter of an hour or more, during which he did not open his lips. Turning to come home, however, he delayed not to resume the discussion; in which both soon became so warmly engaged as not to perceive a dense fog which came rolling rapidly in from the open sea, and so entirely enveloped them as to shut off all view of the shore and the surrounding islands. A heavy ground-swell meantime had been driving the negligent oarsman towards a dangerous reef.

"See now wher' we ha' come to wi' yer talk, Job Redden!" cried Agnes, waking suddenly to their situation. "We 'll be pixilated 'n' driven on to th' rocks an ye don't wake up."

"Oi care not 'f we be, uther; ye ha' moddened me wi' yer folly."

"Oi 'm not bound to talk as you please, thet oi know."

"Yer head is tur-rned wi' that popinjay thet come to th' tavern."

"Yer 're a fool yerself, Job Redden! What should oi care fur him. He wor a gentleman, oi told ye afore; he 's nothin' to me, 'n' mayhap oi 'll never see him again."

"Oh, ye 'll not pull wool over-r my oies loike thet; oi know ye well. Ye 're mad about the popinjay. Ye can think o' nothin' besoide. Ye fancy he 'll be comin' back one o' these foine days 'n' chuck ye under the chin again, 'n' give ye more gold pieces, 'n' carry ye off to make a leddy o' ye!"

"Hold yer silly tongue, mon, 'n' look wher' ye 're goin'," cried the girl, now deaf to his reproaches in their imminent peril; "don't ye hear the breakers on th' rocks? We 're driftin' in, oi tell ye!"

"Will ye say once for a', be ye my sweether-rt or no?" he returned, reckless of the danger.

"Row! row, Job! We 're driftin' in, oi say!"

"Will ye give up the popinjay, 'n' take up wi' me fur good 'n' for aye?"

"Job — Job Redden, will ye pull?"

"Answer!"

"No! no! no! I 'll not answer at any mon's biddin'."

"We 'll just both go to th' devil together, then," cried the incensed young man, unshipping the oars and throwing them into the bottom of the boat.

But he reckoned without his host if he hoped to terrify his companion. Familiar with the sea from her earliest childhood, accustomed to all kinds of weather and all sorts of craft, knowing the course thoroughly, and being only less stalwart and skilful than Job himself, she seized the oars, righted the boat, and after a fierce struggle of a few minutes succeeded in getting it free of the breakers; and then settling to her work with long, clean, vigorous strokes, she pulled the whole distance home, a mile or more, without a break and without a word.

Job, sitting in the bow in dogged silence, watched her stolidly as her comely arms swayed back and forth with the regularity of a machine, and she shook the white foam from her dark hair as now and then a breaker dashed over them.

Rounding up at length to the little wharf, she rose with her eyes glowing and her cheeks all crimson with the exercise, and looking back at her mute companion as she stepped ashore, said with a touch of compassion: —

"Ye 're crimmy wi' th' fog, Job. Ye 'd best get some grog."

"Oi 'm crimmy wher' no grog 'll ever wor-rm me!" he said bitterly as he brushed past her and strode rapidly away.

CHAPTER V.

A SUPPER-PARTY.

ONE morning Frankland received the following letter from home, which is of interest here not only for a memorable suggestion it unwittingly furnished to the Collector, but for a certain antique tone of value to our narrative.

LONDON, DOWNING STREET, 1742.

MY DEAR HARRY, — Seeing myself likely to grow gray before hearing from you, I so far forego considerations of age and dignity as to write again

"D' antico amor senti la gran potenza."

Ay, and a mighty power it hath too, as this will testify. But though I begin to hate you for such neglect, I forbear excommunication with bell and candle while there is such reasonable room for doubt whether you be not ere this slaughtered by the savages or eaten up by wild beasts. My compassion is further moved by the thought that pen and ink may be wanting to you there in the forest, where yet in your d——d persistence you must needs go; but I will waste no more words on that topic. Did I not exhaust the language of entreaty to obstruct your departure? No; I will talk of a more rational subject, — to wit, myself. I will confess (what you must needs presently discover) that I am working off on you a present fit of vapors induced, *imprimis*, by a three days' storm which has kept me house-bound; next,

by the dark and lowering fortunes of our family, — Sir Robert, although made a peer, being done for politically; and last of all, by a vile rheum caught last Thursday at my Lady Townshend's ball, where, however, I swear to you I found such a blaze of beauty assembled as was never before gathered in one room. Judge for yourself. Lady E——s, Lady C——e F——y, Lady L——y M——s, Lady C——a B——t, and, fairer than all, Lady S——a herself — have I said enough? Five hundred invitations, and fully two hundred accepted. The ball broke up at 3 o. c. for the general crowd; but a dozen mad wags, your old boon companions, held fast to the fiddlers, and kept up the dance till the sun peeped in through the curtains.

The town is in a whirl of gayety. The opera in full blast, but indifferently good. 'T is settled the Prince shall go Wednesdays and his Majesty Saturdays, that there may be no danger of their meeting. There 's nothing yet to equal the Farinelli, to my thinking. Monticelli has a good voice, but shows no training; and Amorevoli has not yet sung. The women are better, the Viscontina admirable, — a village wench, 't is said, whom a roving manager heard singing by chance in a barnyard, and straightway rescued from the dung-heap. She sings like a nightingale, and has a fortune in her voice.

You will conclude I am horn-mad about music when I say I am to have two of the above-named warblers to sing for me at home to-morrow night. 'T is for my Lord Fanny, who, you must know, can no longer go to the opera. I may safely whisper to you yonder at the Antipodes, that the old beau has become a monstrous fright, the face of a corpse, — 't is said on account of his epilepsy, — his cheeks dashed with rouge, and, as old Marlboro' swears, not a tooth in his head. Old Marlboro' is *aere perennius* — how can a thing be more lasting than itself? My old namesake Flaccus had

a premonition of her when he wrote. No longer than three weeks ago she was seized with a spasm, and the whole town was agog with hopes she might die. The doctor came in haste, shook his head, and said she must be blooded at once. "I 'll not be blooded," quo' she; "and I 'll live to spite you!" And so faith she did.

To come back again to the Opera, the directors are a set of young men of quality as unskilled as babes. They pay ridiculous salaries. To the Muscovita, for instance, eight hundred pounds, — an unheard-of price for a second woman.

But *veniamo ad altro.* At Court, where 't is as dull as Chancery in vacation, his Majesty continues to limit his favors to the Walmoden, whom he not long since made Countess of Yarmouth. This will set you wondering what has become of a certain other countess, — a quondam friend of yours. Why, truth to tell, my Lady Suffolk, besides being long since past the heyday of her charms, waxed so monstrous deaf, — nay, never think so vile a pun intended, — that the King at length grew tired of bellowing love into her venerable ears, and so transplanted her to a little villa at Twickenham, where she is like some day to be a neighbor of mine, if I ever carry out a present vague purpose of buying a certain snug little box at Strawberry Hill. We have already exchanged gossip over sundry dishes of tea, and she has a store of choice matter, having lived so long at Court. 'T was at one of these sittings she let out the secret of Lady Sundon's mysterious ascendency in the bedchamber: 't was she alone knew of the queen's rupture. "She never took money for her influence," said some one lately to Sir Robert. "No," retorted he; "but she had £1400 in jewels from my Lady Pomfret for the post of Master of the Horse."

Domestic matters are in better trim. I did not much relish at first seeing Moll Skerritt, who had lived so long in

left-handed relations with Sir Robert, made Lady Walpole and elevated to my dead mother's place; but her ladyship, I'm bound to say, behaves with much decorum in her new position. She is so well received, too, that there was quite a scramble among the ladies of the Court as to who should have the honor of presenting her.

I have constant news from Mann at Florence. What think you is the last he says? Why, that old Lady Mary threatens to return to London. We are shaking in our shoes at the thought of having that squalid, tawdry, bedizened old beldam hobbling about among us again, cheating at cards and maligning honest folk with her foul, scandalous tongue.

The prospect of a war over the Austrian Succession every moment increases. What is there left to say?

> "Le donne, i cavalier', l' arme gli amori
> Le cortesi, l' audaci imprese io canto,"

or, rather, *have* sung through I dare not count how many sides of fair paper; mark you it well, Sir Ingrate. You will have a heavy reckoning, for I demand usury. See to it, and presently, if you would not add another to the number of your deadly foes. And so good-night, child.

Yours ever,

HORACE WALPOLE.

Having finished the letter, Frankland turned back and read over and over again a certain passage in it which seemed to have a peculiar interest. He still sat with the open sheet in his hand when a messenger arrived in the livery of the governor, bearing a note containing the compliments of Mrs. Shirley and an invitation to supper for the same evening.

"Nothing could be better," he muttered, despatch-

ing an affirmative answer. "I will consult *her* upon it."

Yonder in Roxbury still stands what remains of the stately old mansion which, nearly a century and a half ago, was the abode of one of the most distinguished of the royal governors. Then it stood remote from the highway, with a commanding view of the sea, the distant town, and the surrounding country, perched upon its granite foundation and approached by an imposing flight of granite steps.

Up these steps Frankland proceeded on the night in question, and having gained admission, was shown through an ante-room opening to the right from the vestibule into the drawing-room, where the mistress of the house in all the old-time grandeur of attire sat receiving her guests.

But more than her luxury of surroundings, more even than her aquiline nose and double chin, Mrs. Shirley's fine air contributed to the imposing figure she presented in stepping forward to meet her young rival in the race for the collectorship. Having already on a former occasion congratulated him on his success, they met without constraint on either side.

"Mr. Frankland — Madam Hutchinson, Mistress Vassall, Mr. Hutchinson." She had barely time to present the new-comer before supper was announced.

The talk at table was chiefly of town and church matters.

"Bromfield and Cushing are returned to the General Court, I see," said his Excellency.

"Yes," said Mr. Hutchinson, "there was little opposition; they are both very popular."

"What else was done at town-meeting?" asked Mrs. Shirley, dexterously cutting up a pair of fowls while his Excellency carved the joint.

"Very little of moment; it was determined to lay out a highway to the fortifications from Summer Street to the Sconce, which can only be done by shaving off a slice from Fort Hill."

"And a great improvement, too," said the Governor; "'t is a roundabout way enough now."

"Then," continued Mr. Hutchinson, "there was some measure taken to prevent the impressment of seamen."

"Ay," his Excellency nodded, "I expected that; those high-handed gentlemen of the navy must have a care, or they will bring a nest of hornets buzzing about their ears."

"But," asked his wife, "what are they to do, since they must have men?"

"Just what I took the liberty of suggesting at the meeting," remarked Mr. Hutchinson, calmly; "but you should have heard how I was berated. 'Men,' cried Mr. Sam Adams, — 'men, sir! they 've as good a right to seize you on your way to the Council Chamber.'"

"What!" cried Frankland, in comical amazement, "seize a gentleman and a magistrate, — poh, poh!"

"Who is this Adams?" asked Madam.

"A North-End maltster," answered Hutchinson; "but very much considered by a certain sort, nevertheless."

"'Adams — Sam,' did you say?" asked the Governor with an air of recollection. "It must have been

a chick of his, then, that I encountered t' other day at Commencement. The young cock-sparrow had the hardihood to come out under my very nose and read a thesis upon the title: 'Whether it be Lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved.'"

"Yes, they grow more and more saucy," interposed Mrs. Hutchinson. "But, to come back to the point; the fact remains that with these common seamen one ship is just the same as another."

"It will not do," said his Excellency, with a decisive shake of his head. "Right or wrong, the practice will never be submitted to here."

"But what other business was transacted?" asked the hostess, taking a hint, from her husband's manner, to change the subject.

"Humph! not much; various trifling matters, — a provision, for instance, requiring everybody to level the snow which they cast out of their yards into the streets."

"Our neighborhood will rejoice at that," exclaimed Miss Vassall; "for last winter, all along Bishop's Alley and Pudding Lane, which you know is our short cut to the Town House, 't was quite like crossing the Alps, with the snow a succession of mountains and valleys the whole way."

"Then," continued Hutchinson, "there was talk of setting up another writing-school at the South end."

"And sorely needed it is," added his wife, "for ours has long been overcrowded."

"I'm told they have very good schools here,"

remarked Frankland, "and that all sorts and conditions are learning to read."

"Yes; 't is our purpose to educate every child above the condition of a servant."

"A dangerous scheme," said the Collector, shaking his head; "'t will make mischief. See the result in the case of What 's-his-name, — the young cockerel who read the paper over at Commencement. Not that there are not exceptions; which reminds me, by the bye, of a visit I made t' other day to a droll little place down the coast, — you all know it, I dare say, — Marblehead. Where," he continued, as everybody nodded assent, "being attracted by the name of a little inn called after our famous tavern in the Strand at home, I went in and found scrubbing the steps a young fisher-lass with a voice like a nightingale."

"Indeed!"

"Oh, I assure you, quite remarkable. I heard her afterwards singing outside in the garden, — a rare voice with a wonderful register, I give you my word, but as untrained, of course, as a bird's."

"The poor child!" cried Mrs. Shirley; "what a pity she cannot be educated!"

"My own thought, madam," continued Frankland, encouraged by the heartiness of the tone; "and, oddly, I had this morning a suggestive letter from Horace Walpole, in which he recounts the history of the reigning London prima donna, — that she was picked up by chance in some out-of-the-way place like this and educated, and is now the wonder of the town."

"Not a doubt of it; 'tis the common history of geniuses, and why may not your little fisher-maid be such another? There 's many a rose blooms under the hedge. If you were only sure of her talent."

"I stake my reputation as a connoisseur on it."

"Then if somebody could be found charitable enough to undertake the expense of her training."

"I would gladly do so much as that myself."

"Are you in earnest?" asked the hostess, exchanging her half-quizzical manner for one more serious.

"Indeed I am."

"Why, then —" began the lady, impulsively.

"Take care!" in a warning tone from her husband.

"Thank you, sir!" returned his wife, quickly. "I was hesitating to make the offer; but with your approval I will venture." Then turning to Frankland, "My husband says 'Take care!' and acting upon such good advice, I will charge myself with the care of the girl's health and education if you succeed in bringing her to town."

"Yes, yes, I warrant you," interrupted the Governor, laughing. "Mrs. Shirley has only seven children of her own to care for, which she finds so small a task that she must needs look abroad for something to employ her time."

"If my children were permitted to engross my attention," retorted his spouse, readily, "the reproach would be just; but my poor opinion is so often demanded on grave matters of State, that by good right

I should be enrolled of the Council, and have my name added to the Civil List."

"I cry you mercy!" exclaimed his Excellency, laughing.

"There is no danger that my household will suffer; and for the rest, I hope I shall always find a little time to bestow in charity, the rather that I have so little else to give."

"Have done! have done! or you will make me out a niggard," protested the Governor.

"Having now, as you see, disposed of all opposition, I may venture to promise you my aid, Mr. Frankland."

"Many thanks, my dear madam. Then it is a bargain. I shall be going to Marblehead soon again, when I will consult the girl's friends about the project, and if the result is favorable we will concert measures how best to carry it out."

On taking his leave later in the evening Frankland thought it prudent to add: —

"I wish to warn your ladyship, anent this fisherlass, that she is a bare-legged, dishevelled little hussy."

"Never fear," returned the latter, with a worldly-wise look; "my expectations are not towering."

CHAPTER VI.

A PAIR OF STOCKINGS.

JOB REDDEN'S parting words, but much more his strange, gloomy look, as he turned away from her that foggy evening on the beach, haunted Agnes for days afterwards. She found herself in a very disturbed and anxious state of mind. However much she resented Job's masterful tone, however unwilling she was to yield to his claim of proprietorship, she was yet by no means clear about her own behavior. Her conscience started up in a very disconcerting way as Job's champion. Pursuing voices sounded in her ears as she came and went about her daily tasks, to the effect that Job was justified in his position, that she had not dealt fairly by him, that his only fault — if fault it could be called — was in loving her too well, and that in fine he was now sorely grieved, and she was in some way to blame for it.

For the first time in their life-long acquaintance he had failed to come promptly, after one of their little fallings-out, and make up. Daily she looked for him, but looked in vain. Every evening from her seat on the old doorstep she cast wistful glances down upon the little groups of idlers and stragglers on the beach, and often caught sight of his tall, vigorous figure in

the throng; but he never by any chance turned his face toward her, never cast a look in the direction of the spot where she sat eager and waiting to wave her hand at the slightest sign of recognition.

Her mind was confused, her heart distressed. Slowly out of this tumult of thought and emotion there took form a conviction that a crisis had come in her life; that the past was divided from the present by an impassable gulf; that yesterday belonged to the happy childhood of years ago; that to-day she had been by some mysterious force thrust forth into the larger and stormful atmosphere of womanhood without path to her feet or guide to follow.

By turns in this mental anarchy came fits of resentment against Job. This was all his doing. It was he who had wilfully brought about this strange, painful state of affairs. Why had he not been content to leave things as they were, when both were happy and all was well? Why, forsooth, must he be everywhere and always so terribly in earnest? Why have such a deadly meaning in everything?

Thus one voice, to which another answered: that perhaps, poor fellow, he could not help it; perhaps she had made him believe that she herself was as much in earnest as he; and if so, what wonder that he was cruelly disappointed? and there could be no doubt that he *was* cruelly disappointed.

With this prevailing voice came back a sense of personal blameworthiness to the unhappy girl. How could she make amends? Even if she were not willing to become Job's wife, he was at least one of her dearest friends; he had been for years her most con-

stant companion, and her intercourse with him a large part of her life. She would do something to show him she was sorry, — make him a little gift, a token, something that he could see was the fruit of her own labor, and done expressly for him.

Her store of feminine accomplishments was soon told. She could knit. She would knit him, then, a pair of stockings, and her mother would give her plenty of good homespun yarn. Job would know from the size of the feet that they must have been done specially for him. She lost no time in carrying out her resolution. Every evening as long as the light lasted, she sat with the big ball of blue yarn in her lap, and with flying needles worked at her task.

Before her accusing conscience meantime the thought arose that she had never before given Job anything beyond a bite of her apple or a handful of chestnuts from her pocket, while he had bestowed upon her countless keepsakes, which, as she remembered now with a tardy pang, she had set small store by. It had always seemed right and proper for Job to give her things. He liked to do it, and any reluctance or hesitation on her part in receiving them had always aroused his instant wrath and been the occasion of a quarrel.

A week sufficed to finish the stockings. The first fair evening afterwards she folded and slipped them into her pocket, and as soon as her work was over strolled down upon the beach. There, as usual, she found little groups of fishermen scattered about, but Job was nowhere to be seen.

Passing her own home, the rafters of which were ringing with the loud cry of one of the young ones undergoing maternal chastisement, she kept on to the now completed fort. Climbing the western slope, she paused to look about, but saw only two or three tired workmen just shouldering their heavy mattocks to go home. Walking along the wide ramparts to the eastern side, she turned the corner, and at last beheld close before her Job's familiar figure stretched out upon the bastion.

She went quietly and sat down beside him. He did not move, or give any sign of recognition.

"Oi ha' been lookin' fur ye, Job," she said, studying his face.

With his eyes fixed steadfastly upon the far-off sea he made no answer.

"Oi thought, as ye ha' not come to — to th' tor-rvern afore, somethin' must be the motter-r."

At this he turned and gave her a significant look. In its mute reproach there was mingled an unmistakable touch of contempt which she instantly saw and resented.

"Now, then, ye need not be lookin' at me loike that, nuther-r. Oi know ye wor moddened at me, but ye ha' been moddened afore; ye 're allers flashin' up loike powder-r, tell oi ha' come not to moind it overmuch; but ye ha' allers been to say ye wor sorry when ye come to yer sense, 'n' when ye did n't come this toime oi thought somethin' must be th' motter-r."

Job moved uneasily, but remained silent.

"If ye 're moddened wi' me, Job, ye ha' no good

cause. Oi ha' more roight to be moddened wi' ye. Ye well-nigh lost me my loife in yer heat, but oi bear ye no grudge; ye wor n't in yer roight moind."

Still Job's face relaxed not. His rugged profile, seen against the clear evening sky, was sharpened by his stern humor almost to comeliness.

"What 's th' motter-r wi' ye, 't ye can't speak?" exclaimed Agnes, impatiently. "Oi ha' said oi bear ye no grudge, 'n' if oi spoke onythin' hor-rd to ye oi 'm sorry, 'n' ther's no more to be said."

"Go away wi' yer prattle. Why can't ye leave me alone? Ye care nothin' fur-r me."

"Who said oi care nothin' fur-r ye? Oi 'm not sayin' whether oi do or no; but oi 'm not goin' to be told what oi 'm to do, or what oi 'm to say, for onybody."

"Yer not th' old Ag; yer head is tur-rned; ye 've lost yer sense."

"It 's ye ha' lost yer sense, and all yer senses! When did ever oi set up to tell ye what ye must do, willy nilly? Oi 'm old enough to know my own moind, 'n' oi 'll not go at onybody's beck 'n' nod."

"Ha' done talkin', then. 'F ye know yer moind, that 's enough. Sin' yer moind 's not my moind, oi ha' no more to say."

"Keep yer grudge, then, if yer moinded to. Oi ha' said oi 'm sorry to ha' moddened ye, 'n' oi can say no more. 'F ye 'll not speak to me, oi 'll not stay."

There was a momentary trembling about Job's mouth, which was presently repressed.

"Oi ha' brought ye a bit o' a present," continued Agnes, rising. "It 's nothin' to speak o', but just

somethin' oi made mysel', 'n' ye may keep it now to moind ye 't ye would n't make up when oi said oi was sorry; 'n' oi shall never say it again, Job Redden, 'n' ye need n't expect it."

Agnes laid her little parcel down on the grass, and slowly walked away, turning back a wistful glance as she disappeared from sight.

Job sat motionless, with fixed, stern look fastened upon the sea, long after she had gone. At length, rousing from his revery, he saw the little parcel. Slowly he unrolled the coarse stockings and smoothed them on his knee; and as he stroked them tenderly with his rough hand, a great passionate sob burst from him, and starting up, he hurried away in the gathering dusk.

Agnes went home dismayed. The visit from which she had hoped so much had proved futile. Her apology and her gift had been in vain. A new, vague sense of loneliness stole upon her, — a feeling that the wide world, so crowded with fellow-creatures, was little better than a wilderness, and that her life, which hitherto had been as free and joyous as a bird's, was growing dark and tragic. Nevertheless, however much puzzled by Job's behavior, she was not yet quite without hope that he would relent and come to see her the next evening, as of old.

Next day, however, word was brought that a big school of mackerel had been driven into the mouth of the harbor, and directly all was excitement in the little cove. Night and day the fishermen worked with might and main, taking advantage of their stroke of luck. There was no time for Job to come visiting,

as Agnes well knew; there was, indeed, scant time to eat and sleep. Meantime, an incident occurred which diverted her thoughts.

Going one day to draw water from the well which was sunk where it is to be seen to this very day, close to the grass-grown road leading from the highway to the tavern, Agnes loitered over her pleasing task, watching the heavy bucket knock against the slippery stones as it slowly rose, and listening meanwhile to the musical tinkling of the falling drops, when she was startled by a voice close behind her, saying: —

"Good-day, fair Agnes!"

Full well she knew the voice, and heard the words; yet, turning with a mantling blush, she courtesied deeply, without daring to look up or attempt a reply.

"Will you give me a drink from your bucket, my good girl?" asked the traveller, with reassuring accent, as he noted her embarrassment.

"Ay," she replied quickly, recalled to herself by the demand for service, "if ye 'll wait tell oi fetch a glass; here 's nothin' but the biggin to drink from."

"That will do, that will do; let me have the biggin by all means."

"As ye please," cried Agnes, quickly bringing a measure of the sparkling water to the thirsty traveller as he sat upon his horse. Raising the clumsy wooden vessel to his lips and splashing the while his elegant riding-habit with the falling drops, he drank a few swallows, and carelessly tossing away the rest, handed back the biggin to Agnes, who stood covertly watching him.

"Ah," he exclaimed, wiping his lips with a square of perfumed lawn, "I had forgotten water was so refreshing. I was well-nigh choked with that cursed dust; 't is a long ride from Boston hither."

"Ay, so oi hear-rd 'em say, sir-r."

"And do you never come to Boston, Agnes?"

"No; but oi ha' been to Salem, 'n' it 's a gron' place."

"If you think Salem grand, you can safely be trusted to like Boston," said the Collector, smiling. "Are you, then, so fond of your little town here that you do not care to go abroad and see the world?"

"Ay, oi 'd loike gretly to see 't, but—" She paused as if it were idle to finish the sentence.

"Why, then, do you not go?"

"'Why'? Because oi — oi — 'cause ther's nothin' fur 't, 'n' everythin' to hender."

"What 's to hinder?"

"Front 'n' foremost," answered Agnes, forgetting her awe of the stranger in her interest in the talk, "oi ha' no call yonder-r."

"You should have a call, then; you ought to go and learn to sing, to have your voice trained; you have too fine a voice, my lass, to waste in singing to the birds. If you studied hard you might become a great singer."

Agnes looked up quickly with an expression of eager interest.

"How would you like that?"

"Oi dunno," she said, dropping her eyes before his searching gaze, and making vague marks in the sand with her bare toe. "Th' minister says 't is oidle to be

'givin' up yer thoughts to things 't cannot come to pass."

"And he is right, too," said Frankland, studying the downcast face before him, in which native mother-wit was struggling with embarrassment; "but this is not a case of that sort; here 's a matter can be easily brought to pass. If you are willing to study and learn you will find plenty of friends to help you. I know a kind gentlewoman in Boston this minute who would gladly aid you, and I — I will help you myself."

Agnes raised her head again and looked at the speaker with a puzzled and startled air. His look was grave and earnest, yet his proposition was tremendous and incredible.

"Ye must be funnin', sir-r," she almost gasped.

"No; I am quite in earnest," returned Frankland, smiling. "What doubtless seems a great matter to you is but a trifle to me. I am rich, and can afford it."

"But — but," urged Agnes, bewildered, "oi ha' no toime; oi connot be sper-red; oi must be ear-rnin' my bread 'n' meat."

"Silly girl, you can earn much more after you have been taught than you can ever do here scrubbing floors and drawing water."

"Be ye sure o' thet, sir-r?" she asked, impressed with this practical suggestion.

"Quite sure."

"'T is loike the wor-rk o' witches," she muttered, casting a suspicious glance at Frankland as not unlike the kind of person who might be expected to vanish. "What 'll mother say?" she continued

presently, her face flushed with excitement, her eyes dilated, and her whole mind centred on the amazing proposal she had just heard. "What 'll mother say now, oi wonder-r."

"Go seek her out and ask," said Frankland, gathering up his reins. "Stay! Bring her here to the inn to see me after supper and we will talk of it further; but first, my good lass, go hunt up that loitering landlord of yours and bid him attend me."

CHAPTER VII.

PARSON HOLYOKE IN CONSULTATION.

DULY after supper, as Frankland was seated at ease in the little fore-room, Agnes came ushering in Goody Surriage with, —

"Here 's my mother, sir-r, come to see ye!"

Dame Surriage stood awkwardly courtesying in the doorway until encouraged by Frankland's gracious greeting to enter.

"Ye do us gret honor, sir-r, 'n' ye wor very koind in the motter-r o' the shoes t' our Ag, 'n' she ha' been very choice o' them."

"Yes, something too choice," said Frankland, glancing at the girl's bare feet.

"Ah, they 'll do her a long toime, sir-r, fur Lor-rd's Day wear-r, 'n' thet 's all she ha' need o'."

"Poh, poh! put them on and wear them out, and when they 're gone send her up to me and she shall have some more! 'T is a great pity, though, to see a bright lass like Agnes running about barefooted and neglected; she ought to be sent to school."

"Ay, so she ought, sir-r, 'n' oi worrnt ye she 'd make a foine scholard too, wud our Ag: she ha' ever been the forardest young un in the town, 'n' the minister 'll bear me out; she can say the psaums

a'most as well as himself. Ag, show the gentleman how foine ye can say the psaums!"

"Sh–h, mother; don't ye be foolish, now!" protested Agnes, with a shamefaced look.

"She 's ashamed, the silly gawk, to show off afore ye, sir-r, but Mister-r Holyoke 'll tell ye; an' she ha' lor-rned to write her name out fair-r 'n' lor-rge loike a clor-rk."

"I can well believe it; and 't is a great pity she should not have a chance to go on and study, since she learns so quickly."

"So it is, sir-r; so it is."

"I have been asking her how she would like to go and live in Boston."

"Oi worrnt her she'd loike it; she wor ever eager to see str-range places."

"But she fears you would not be willing to spare her," continued Frankland, feeling his way.

"'N' why not? Heaven for-rbid oi should stond in the way o' th' good fortune o' my own choild."

"Spoken like a sensible woman, dame; now, then, listen to what I have to suggest. Your daughter, you may not know, has a remarkable voice —"

"Oh, thet oi do, yer honor-r," interrupted Goody Surriage with a knowing shake of the head, — "thet oi do, 'n' her fother-r too, poor man! She ha' been scr-reamin' 'n' squallin' 'bout th' house ever since she wor-r bor-rn tell we ha' been well-nigh deafened."

"Very good. I was speaking of her singing the other day to Mrs. Shirley, one of my friends in Boston —"

"The Governor's leddy?"

"Yes; and a very charitable gentlewoman she is. I told her of the poor little fisher-lass whom I heard singing in the orchard and who had such a beautiful voice, and she was deeply interested, and at once offered to aid in having her trained."

"Bless her good her-rt for 't, too!"

"For the small expense of her living and schooling, I will gladly take that upon myself; while Mrs. Shirley would establish her in some good comfortable lodgings, and have an eye to her health and welfare."

"Listen to thet, Ag! Do you hear the gentlemon? What ha' ye to say, choild?"

Agnes could only courtesy and stammer out with a red face: —

"Oi ha' lost my tongue; speak you fur-r me, mother-r!"

"Tut, tut! There 's no need of speaking yet. Wait till something is accomplished. If now your father — you have a father?"

"Ay, Ed, — ha, ha!" laughed Goody Surriage, confidently; "*he*'ll ha' nothin' to say, so Ag's only well-fared 'n' content; but the minister, — we must get the minister's moind; he ha' hed th' guidin' o' Ag since she wor-r a baby."

"And does the good man live hereabouts?" asked Frankland.

"Not a stone's-throw away, sir-r, 'f yer honor-r moind not a bit of a walk."

"Oh, then, pray bid the worthy parson come wait on me in the morning if he has any objections to offer," interrupted Frankland, ignoring the dame's suggestion. "But stay!" he continued, as the two

rose to withdraw. "You must not go without a song; sing to me, Agnes, the ditty I heard t' other morning in the orchard!"

Agnes, quite abashed at this unexpected request, did herself small credit; but her listener forgot to criticise minor defects in his delight over the rich vibrating tones of her marvellous voice.

Betimes the next morning, before he had breakfasted, Frankland was told he had visitors. Finishing dressing at his leisure, the young gentleman sauntered down to find Dame Surriage and her pastor waiting in the fore-room. The Rev. Edward Holyoke, whose solid qualities of mind and character afterwards won for him the distinguished position of President of Harvard College, was noted even then among his brother ministers for his singular union of great gentleness of heart with austerity of demeanor and an ever-present sense of his own priestly dignity.

For all his loftiness of character and elevation of mind, however, he was plainly somewhat disconcerted upon Frankland's first appearance. The fine person of the young stranger, set off by the richness of his dress, his elegance of speech, and above all his easy, patronizing manners, were all so unusual to one who all his life had lived remote from the gay circles of rank and fashion, that it was impossible wholly to resist their influence. Frankland, on the other hand, who had been brought up to regard with ridicule and contempt the faith, the manners, and the very persons of the Puritans, felt neither awe nor reverence for his visitor's professional character, and was prevented only by natural kindliness from betraying a

feeling which no canon of good breeding required him to conceal.

"Good-morrow, dame," he said with a pleasant nod of greeting to Goody Surriage, who stood bobbing before him. "And so you have brought your worthy minister to talk with me. I am glad to see you, although you had well-nigh caught me in bed. Pray sit you down and let us be comfortable! I suppose, sir," he continued, turning to the parson, "our good friend here has told you of our little plan to send her daughter to school. I hope you have come to express your approval," he concluded, coming straight to the point in the easiest way in the world.

"Ahem!" exclaimed Mr. Holyoke, quite taken aback by this abrupt introduction of the subject, "that I know not. I have come to confer with you upon a matter which seems, from the little I have heard, to be of a very extraordinary nature."

"Ah!" said the Collector carelessly, settling himself more comfortably in his chair.

"'Tis a grave matter, sending a young woman away from home among strangers. It must needs be a momentous change, moreover, and we would be fully persuaded it is to be a change for the better."

"Very naturally," remarked Frankland, busily adjusting his lace ruffles.

"It behooves us to move with the greatest circumspection."

"Oh, without a doubt," returned the young gentleman in the same tone of indifference, helping himself the while to a pinch of snuff from a jewelled

box without extending the courtesy to his guests, thereby unconsciously indicating his sense of their disparity in rank.

"And in the first place," continued Mr. Holyoke, who with recovered ease was gradually assuming his usual authoritative tone, "it seems a step most unprecedented, and not without grounds of suspicion, to intrust a girl of Agnes's tender years to the guidance of a man so young. I wish not to impugn your intent, sir —"

"'T is most considerate of you, truly," interrupted Frankland, with a lofty look.

"But," calmly pursued the minister, "I would fain know the motives which lead a man of your rank to take such an interest in our child's welfare."

"They are briefly told," answered Frankland, composedly. "I come by chance to this out-of-the-way place and find a child of good wit and quick apprehension growing up in ignorance and neglect. I chance to hear her sing. I discover that she has a rare and beautiful voice. It occurs to me 't would be an act of charity to snatch the child out of her poverty and ignorance and give her a chance to cultivate the powers God has endowed her with."

"It would seem a praiseworthy intent," said the minister, reflectively, studying the young stranger the while with close attention. "But have you duly considered, sir, that this step you propose may change her whole way of life?"

"And is her present way of life, then, so blooming with promise, that a change would be deemed perilous?" asked Frankland, coolly.

"I approve not entirely her present position," answered the minister in a tone which showed that the satire had been wholly wasted upon him. "She came hither without my cognizance; but she leads here at least an honest and industrious life."

"Hark ye, my friends," exclaimed Frankland, rising impatiently, whether irritated by the ungracious reception of his munificent offer or by the covert insinuation in the last speech, "that we may not needlessly prolong this discussion, and that I may have an opportunity of breaking my fast before noon, let me say that if the girl comes to me she will be under the eye and patronage of the first lady of the province, as I have already advised her mother. If you be not content with that suggestion, go you up thither yourselves and make what arrangements suit you."

"Ay, ay, Mister-r Holyoke," interposed Goody Surriage, taking alarm lest the matter should miscarry; "'t is the Gov'nor-r's leddy her-rsel,' as I told ye."

"Or, if you choose to reject my offer," continued the Collector in the same tone, "pray consult among yourselves and let me know your will."

"But Mrs. Shirley, sir," persisted the minister, unmoved by the other's irritation, — "is she held to be a Christian?"

"Assuredly; she is a member of the Church of England, if haply you should consider that answers the description."

"Why, in some small sense all those who acknowledge our blessed Lord and Saviour are loosely called

Christians; but the sort you speak of are mostly blinded with error and walk in gloom which is but little removed from outer darkness."

"It may not be amiss to inform you that I grope in a like obscurity myself."

"As I opined," returned the minister, calmly invulnerable; "and for your comfort let me explain that I would not be understood as denying that there may be well-meaning persons among them."

"Ay, to be sure; why not?" chimed in Goody Surriage, anxiously; "oi ha' known a bor-rn Papist, 'n' she brought back a pur-rse she found in th' road."

"'T is a great charge you lay upon yourself," pursued the minister, evidently not yet through with the subject, "to assume such a heavy expenditure."

"In your ignorance of my resources you must needs let me be the judge of that," answered the Collector, shortly.

"True, I know not the measure of your wealth; but I reflect that if any mischance befall you, what then is to become of Agnes?"

"She would be in no worse condition than she is now,— dependent upon the labor of her own hands."

"Ther' 't is; Mister Holyoke, what think ye o' thet?" exclaimed Goody Surriage, who sat nervously see-sawing on the edge of her chair, divided in feeling between habitual awe of her pastor and a dread lest the negotiation fall through.

"Therein, it seems, you greatly err," pursued the minister, unheeding her. "Once surround the girl

with luxury and accustom her to idleness, and she will speedily become unfitted for the menial toil to which she is now so cheerfully resigned."

"So much the better; she would then be fitted to gain her bread in other ways than by scullery-work."

Master Holyoke did not reply, but seemed absorbed in silent study of Frankland's face.

"But," continued the latter, advancing with the evident intent of putting an end to the interview, and drawing at the same time several guineas from his purse, "'t is easy to raise objections; and since you are in the humor for it, consider the matter among yourselves and do as you will. Should you conclude to accept my offer, bring the girl to town at your convenience; and as the step must needs be attended with some expense, you will find here wherewithal to defray it."

He extended the money as he spoke toward Master Holyoke, but that scrupulous person made no move to receive it, saying, —

"But if, on the contrary, we should decide *not* to send her —"

"Then give the money to the poor," exclaimed the Collector, indifferently; "there must needs be widows and orphans in a seaport town like this."

"Humph!" said the minister, reflecting; "I have no right to refuse what may have been sent by Divine Providence; and so, young gentleman," he continued, reluctantly taking the gold pieces, "in whatsoever way we may, after prayerful consideration, determine to apply your bounty, we shall pray that the divine

blessing may attend our decision; and for you there will remain the consciousness of well-doing, which is higher than any earthly reward."

The Collector, already bored by the good clergyman's qualms and arguments, showed himself little impressed by this concluding benediction, but frankly yawning in their faces as he bowed his visitors out, hastened to his neglected breakfast.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE.

IT was high noon on a bright October day several weeks after his visit to Marblehead, that Collector Frankland sat lolling over his official desk. Having signed clearances for one or two outgoing vessels, listened to the complaints of divers discontented merchants, and digested some late instructions from the Home Government, he had duly despatched the more pressing business of the day, and now picked up the tiny sheet of the "Evening Post," the previous day's issue, wherein his roving eye presently lighted upon the following advertisement, which he proceeded to cut out: —

"A lusty, able-bodied white servant-man's time of five years to be disposed of. Inquire of the Printer and know further."

His action with regard to the advertisement has no significance here save in so far as it would seem confirmatory of current gossip in the town, that the home-loving and hospitable young Englishman was about to set up an establishment of his own.

Throwing down the newspaper, and putting on his hat with the possible intent of going around to the sign of the "Heart and Crown" in Cornhill and seeing what Mr. T. Fleet the printer had to say further

about the advertisement, he was met at the door by a clerk who came ushering in two droll-looking figures,— Goody Surriage and Agnes in their holiday garb.

"Ah, my pretty Agnes, is it you? Dame, I hope I see you well!" he exclaimed with genuine cordiality. "So then you have really come at last. I had well-nigh given you up."

"Ay—ugh—we be roight glad to foind ye," exclaimed the dame, bobbing breathlessly before him. "'T is a puzzlin' place, this town; we ha' been lost a hā-āf scor-re toimes fro' the wā-ār-rf hither. Ay, sir-r, oi thought not to ha' been so long, but Mister-r Holyoke takes his own toime to make up his moind; then ther' was all the makin' ready, 'n' it 's not ever-ry day we could ha' the ketch."

"You came by water, then?"

"Thet did we, 'n' my goodman 's below yonder at th' wā-ār-rf waitin' agin oi go back."

"And so, lassie," continued Frankland, turning with a kindly look to Agnes, "you have come up to try your fortunes in Boston?"

"Ay, sir-r; but oi 'm thinkin' what oi 'll do when oi 'll ha' nobody here belongin' to me," returned Agnes, with a premonitory touch of homesickness.

"She 's loike a baby thet 's never-r been weaned," explained Dame Surriage.

"Tut, tut! she 'll be a stout-hearted, sensible girl; I 'll answer for her," said Frankland, encouragingly.

"But 'f oi ha' nobody to speak to—"

"You will have me; I will look out that you do not get down-hearted."

Agnes' eyes kindled in spite of her dejection, and she looked up gratefully at this unexpected touch of kindness.

"You will have no time to get down-hearted," pursued her benefactor. "You will have your music and your books to occupy you, and Mrs. Shirley — that reminds me; you must wait upon her without delay; I cannot go with you this morning. I will give you a note," he continued, sitting down to his desk and rapidly writing a few words of introduction. "But first," he continued, rising, "you shall come with me and get some dinner, and I will send you out afterwards to the Governor's house. William," he cried to a servant, as they were leaving the room, "order the coach to meet me in an hour at the 'Ship Tavern.'"

To that famous old ordinary in Hanover Street accordingly they repaired.

"See," cried Frankland, pointing to a huge crack running transversely down the façade, "there are still the marks of the earthquake."

"My sinful her-rt!" exclaimed Goody Surriage, gazing, "but 't is an awful thing!"

The worthy skipper of the "Ship," as the host was jocularly called, stared a little at the droll-looking guests his lavish young patron chose to entertain; but he failed not to bring forth his best for their use and serve the party with zealous attention. Agnes plainly felt more at home at the inn, and looked about with wonder and curiosity at all the new features in the fittings and service. As for Goody Surriage, she was so overcome with the honor of Frankland's

presence at the table that she could scarcely eat a mouthful.

When they came out from dinner, there stood the Collector's carriage already drawn up in front of the inn. And now poor Goody Surriage's last scrap of presence of mind quite deserted her at the overwhelming thought of riding in that stately equipage with the coat-of-arms emblazoned on the panel and a coachman in resplendent livery on the box. She uttered some incoherent protests, made a vague and futile attempt to get up on the box with the coachman, until a glance from the awful eye of that functionary deterred her.

As for Agnes, she took no note of details, but followed after with a dazed look and an air as though she were moving through the unreal scenes of a dream. Constrained by her stiff, heavy shoes and holiday dress, she climbed clumsily into the coach, and in rapt unconsciousness encountered the stare of the passers-by, which her mother shrank into the farthest corner to escape.

Arriving after a long drive at the Governor's house, they mounted the granite steps, and pausing nervously to arrange their dress, at last timidly sounded the ponderous knocker. It required a second and indeed a third summons of that feeble sort to bring to the door the portly and leisurely flunky, who, having at length arrived, surveyed them with a chilling and critical glance, and was about to shut them out with the curt direction, — so often repeated that it was excusably shorn of undue ceremony, — that if they wanted to see his Excel-

lency they must go to the Province House, when Goody Surriage bethought her to bring forth the note. The experienced lackey, noting that the seal was impressed with a coat-of-arms, discreetly changed his tone, civilly bade them enter, bestowed them with all ceremony in the ante-room, and strolled away to find his mistress.

Mrs. Shirley did not keep her humble visitors waiting. She came down directly with the note in her hand.

"So this is the singing-bird from Marblehead! — but Mr. Frankland told me not you were such a beauty, my dear," she exclaimed, gazing at Agnes with undisguised admiration. "And this is your mother, I suppose? You are welcome, dame," she continued, shaking hands graciously with Goody Surriage and then seating herself comfortably in a neighboring arm-chair, while the two stood respectfully before her. "And have you come all the way from Marblehead this morning?"

"Ay, an' wi' ease, ma'am," returned the dame; "'t is no gret run wi' a good wind."

"And this, then, is your first visit to Boston, child?" asked Mrs. Shirley, attentively studying her youthful visitor.

"Ay, ma'am," stammered Agnes, painfully embarrassed under such examination.

"Come with me, then, and you shall have a bird's-eye view of the whole town!" said the observant hostess, leading the way to a room across the hall in order to give the girl time to recover her composure. "See, yonder is Boston with all its steeples

and windmills; and if you have keen eyes you may make out the beacon on the top of the Tramount!"

Agnes gazed with curiosity and delight upon the outspread panorama, while the shrewd matron and woman of the world narrowly scanned her unconscious face.

"'T is a gret city!" exclaimed the neglected dame, peering over their shoulders.

"Nay, 't is not so very vast yet," returned their hostess, smiling at the awe-struck tone. "We have but eighteen thousand souls, all told; but 't is a snug, busy, little town for all that, and gives my husband more trouble to govern than all the rest of the province."

"Ay; they wor ever-r a hoigh 'n' moighty folk," murmured the dame, absorbed with the view.

"Yes," retorted her ladyship, sharply, "not to say cavilling and contumacious; but," she continued, suddenly recollecting herself and regarding Agnes with renewed attention, "you are taller than I supposed, my child; how old may you be, pray?"

"Just tur-rned fifteen oi 'm thinkin'," answered Agnes, with an uncertain glance at her mother.

"She wor ever a str-roppin' creatur', ma'am," explained Goody Surriage, in apology for her size.

"There 's plenty of time to learn yet, then," continued their hostess, ignoring the maternal comment.

"An' the for-rardest hussy in the town to lor-rn," interposed the dame again.

"You have been to school, then?"

"No," said Agnes; "'t was the minister-r lor-rned me."

"It 's no gret motter-r she knows, ma'am, but she need make her mor-rk no longer-r, 'n' she ha' the psaums a'most by her-rt."

Agnes was spared further embarrassment by a welcome interruption. There was a rushing sound outside in the hall, with the noise of suppressed laughter, and directly a half-grown girl appeared in the doorway holding by the collar a large mastiff.

"Come here, my dear," said Mrs. Shirley; "I want you to know my visitors; this is my daughter," she continued as the latter advanced; "and this, my dear, is Agnes, a friend of Mr. Frankland's, who has come to go to school in Boston. I want you to be friends."

The two girls courtesied, — Agnes awkwardly, and the other with an easy and careless grace which marked the difference in their breeding.

"Can you not entertain us, my dear, with an air upon your harpsichord?" asked the mother.

Without coyness or protestation the well-bred child went at once to the instrument and played.

The fascination with which Agnes watched the young performer, and the delight, approaching rapture, with which she listened to the music, were carefully noted by Mrs. Shirley. When the performance ended, Agnes was unable to repress a long-drawn sigh of appreciation.

"Would *you* like to learn the harpsichord yourself, Agnes?" asked Mrs. Shirley, kindly.

"Oh, oi cud never lor-rn to do thet!" she returned, fixing upon the young player a look of unbounded wonder and admiration.

"Oh, yes, you can, my dear, if you are willing to study," said her hostess, encouragingly; "but now my daughter shall take you out and show you the garden, while I have a little talk with your mother."

The two girls, nothing loath, went off together and were soon heard laughing and talking at ease on the lawn outside, while Mrs. Shirley good-naturedly listened to voluble details of Agnes's birth and training from garrulous Goody Surriage.

"I see she has been a good child, and will live, I am sure, to be an honor and a blessing to you," she said at length, rising to put an end to the interview. "And now for the business in hand; she had better remain for the present with me, until she feels herself a little at home and I can get her wardrobe in suitable repair."

"'Her wā-ardrobe!'" echoed the dame with proud satisfaction; "rest yer-r her-rt easy on thet scor-re, ma'am! Ag ha' th' foinest outfit ever-r seen in Mar-rblehead. Mister Fr-ronklon, he ha' left behoind a gret stor-re o' money, 'n' oi ha' sper-red no expense; she ha' everythin' o' th' foinest, not to mention my own best roquello oi hed when oi wor morried, — as good as new."

"Indeed!" exclaimed her new friend, controlling an impulse to smile, as she surveyed Agnes standing without on the lawn grotesquely attired in the venerable marriage-cloak of Goody Surriage, with clumsy brogans on her feet and her head crowned with an indescribable hood which would have made a guy of an angel.

"Ay," continued the enthusiastic dame; "her for-

ther ha' huff'd 'n' ding'd thet ther' wor n't a space in th' house to sit him down, what wi' Ag's petticoats; 'n' Mister-r Holyoke ha' taken me roundly to task thet oi sh'uld ha' her head tur-rned wi' foiner-ry."

"I am glad to hear she is so well provided," said Mrs. Shirley, gravely. "Nothing remains, then, but to send her luggage hither until I can look up some suitable lodgings in which to bestow her."

"'T is most koind 'n' obligin' of ye, beyand onything', oi 'm sure; but — but — " stammered the embarrassed dame, "in the motter-r o' the lodgin's, Mister-r Holyoke ha' writ to a fr-ren' o' his, 'n' — 'n' — "

"I see," interposed the shrewd matron, "you have already secured lodgings for your daughter — "

"But — but," interrupted the anxious dame, "'t is agreed, 't is agreed, moind, thet you 'n' his honor shall ha' the guidin' o' her, an' 'f ye approve not the place, oi 'll make bold to wi'stond Mister-r Holyoke i' the motter-r 'n'— "

"By no means," said Mrs. Shirley, graciously. "Your clergyman has no doubt made choice of a suitable place; and if Mr. Frankland is content I can have no objection."

"But ye will not lose sight o' Ag? She 'll be heavy at her-rt i' this gret town wi'out home or mother-r."

"Yes, yes, dame, rest assured I will not neglect her! I have promised Mr. Frankland my aid in his undertaking, and I shall not be wanting to my word as occasion serves."

"Thonk ye, thonk ye, ma'am! 'T will be a gret comfort to me at home to think Ag has some koind

fren' at hond; 'n' the poor choild hersel' 'll be most moindful o' yer-r goodness, 'n' follow yer guidin', ye may be sur-re. So now we must take our leave, afore the patience o' yon grond gentlemon on the coach-box is clean gone."

CHAPTER IX.

THE WIDOW RUCK.

NORTH of the Mill-creek, in a substantial brick house, the eastern gable of which abutted upon Tileston Street, lived the Widow Ruck. The ample size of her dwelling and the thrifty appearance of her large garden, which covered a space now occupied by several modern brick blocks, bespoke a comfortable worldly estate in the owner. Why Mrs. Ruck should have resented this natural inference is, at this distance of time, not clear; but certain it is she let slip no chance of discrediting such a presumption, whether by verbal protest or more effectively by the exercise at all times of a rigorous economy. There were not wanting insinuations among her contemporaries that the widow's thrift exceeded the due bounds of frugality, and had developed in the course of years into a trait less admirable. It behooves us, however, on such a point, to reject what may have been mere neighborly backbiting, and as an historical character accord to Mrs. Ruck the privilege of being judged by her own words and acts as they are left to us.

To offset these injurious reflections, it is but fair to add that, as a member in unimpeachable standing of the North Congregation, she was noted, not only for

the strictest justice in her dealings, but generally for the austere correctness of her life. In the religious community, indeed, she was a leader, equipped for her position, not so much by superior intelligence, extraordinary foresight, or unusual penetration, as by a force more availing, to wit, strength of conviction. Her strength in this way was enormous. Within human limitation it may safely be called absolute, and was emphasized rather than disguised by habitual reticence. Her outward person was so in keeping with these characteristics as to suggest that the inworking forces had gradually moulded it to this harmonious semblance. She wore a serene, assured, but long-suffering look, very difficult to describe; more like, perhaps, the expression of chronic and conscious martyrdom than anything else. A very noticeable trait in her face was a deep, lateral furrow across the forehead intersected at right angles by her heavy upturned eyebrows. For the rest, the lines of her face were downward; her nose was straight, her mouth sufficiently firm, and her chin not so emphatic as might have been expected.

A person of this sort is not apt to be found wanting in a crisis. It is accordingly matter of history that in the memorable quarrel of the day which rent the North Congregation, the widow was the backbone of the Gee faction. She not only stood by her pastor, she led him on. Firm against all attempts at conciliation or compromise, she was one of the inflexible, victorious few who held the wavering body of conservatives in hand, and ultimately drove their antagonists from the field.

In vain the Rev. Samuel Mather, recognizing the animating spirit of the opposition, went around to Tileston Street to expostulate and pray with his stubborn adversary. In mechanical deference to the attitude of prayer, the widow laid down her knitting, rose, and shut her eyes; but for all other effect upon her, the fervent supplication poured forth by her ingenious visitor might as well have been addressed to Buddha.

Naturally enough Mrs. Ruck's house, being within a stone's-throw of the sanctuary, became a favorite rallying-place for all the meetings and conferences growing out of the warfare. This was partly the result of her leadership, and partly, as her neighbors said, because it never seemed to inconvenience the widow to have meetings, with her small and well-ordered household, — there being besides herself only her daughter Mercy in family.

Mercy Ruck, moreover, was no infant. Her salad days were already over. The fact that she had remained single in an age when spinsterhood was almost unknown has been unjustly ascribed to certain physical peculiarities, which it would be ungracious, as it is happily unnecessary, to describe. To a narrow circle, however, the truth was known that even poor Mercy's life had not been without its touch of romance; that years before she had indeed been formally betrothed to a thriftless ne'er-do-well, who, having taken to drinking and other evil courses, had at length been forbidden the house by the indignant widow. There was, moreover, a profane story afloat, that on the memorable night of his dismissal the widow, after sharply upbraiding the

incorrigible man, thrust him forth at last with the parting benediction: —

"Go, and never let me set eyes on you again! Go, and may the Lord have mercy —"

"All right; let — hic — let him have her! No — hic — nobody else will!"

And so the ribald scoffer went his way, — a very bad way too, as it proved, — and Mercy's yearning heart was given over to the worm of concealment, which did its fell work on her maiden hope, and preyed at will upon the scant damask of her cheek. The scoffer's words proved true. The weary years rolled round and brought not his successor. Meantime, save for the religious meetings above described, life in the Ruck household was one unvarying round of leaden hours, linked to some menial and foreallotted task, and leaving no record of their flight save in its accomplishment.

One day this domestic treadmill was suddenly stopped: Mrs. Ruck received a letter. In itself, a letter was an event; this letter was much more, — it contained a startling proposition.

"'T is a most strange proceeding of Master Holyoke," said the widow, reading the letter for the twentieth time. "I know not what maggot pricked him to do it."

"Perhaps 't is some kin of his own," suggested Mercy.

"To take a stranger into my house! — it is not to be thought of," continued the widow, unheeding her daughter's remark. "How do I know what sort she is of, and whether she has Christian bringing-up?"

"But if he commends her — "

"And if he does, — what matters a man's commendation? What knows he of her habits, — whether they be cleanly, whether she will not cast everything out of order, leave open the doors, track in slime from the highway, and break the china? I care nothing for such commending."

"But she may not be of that sort," pleaded Mercy, to whom the prospect of having a youthful addition to their household seemed not so unpleasant. "'T is a chance she may be well-behaved."

"Fudge!" said the widow, emphatically. "'T is an outlandish place yonder she comes from, and the people are a wild set; they have long had a bad name. No; I 'll have nothing to do with her!"

During this last speech there had been heard a heavy rumbling in the street. With the unconscious habit of making the most of her small opportunities, Mercy had mechanically gone to the window, and now turned about with a startled look.

"Here 's a grand coach drawn up before the door, and — a fine young gentleman getting out; and — my soul 'n' body! Mother! Mother! He 's comin' in!"

Both women unconsciously fingered their hair and smoothed their aprons, — the widow casting meantime a critical glance about the room.

"There are three of them; he has two women with him. 'T is nobody we know!" exclaimed Mercy, taking another hurried peep and cautiously retreating.

Directly the brass knocker sounded, and a mo-

ment after the visitors were ushered into the living-room. To Mercy, who stood near the door in a helpless state of uncertainty whether to fly or to stay, Frankland, deceived by her unimposing appearance, handed his hat on entering. She, interpreting this perhaps as a delicate attention, held fast to the hat during the interview, gently smoothing it, from time to time, with a caressing movement, and regarding its owner with speechless admiration.

"Have I the honor of addressing Mrs. Ruck?" he asked, with an air of indifference.

The widow courtesied stiffly, and adjusted the immaculate strings of her mob-cap.

"We have come, then — that is, this good woman has an errand with you. Dame, speak for yourself!" he said, stepping aside to make way for Goody Surriage.

"Will you please to be seated?" said the widow, with grave politeness, settling back, the while, into her own chair, and folding her hands in her lap.

"Ay!" exclaimed Dame Surriage, perching herself upon the edge of the nearest chair. "Mister-r Holyoke ha' told ye, beloike. It 's fur-r our-r Ag, ther'. She ha' come up hither-r to be made a scholar-rd; 'n' our-r teacher-r ha' commended ye fur the roight sor-rt to take care o' the poor choild. Only, oi thought not 't would be so gr-rond a place," continued the dame, looking about with frank admiration. "Oi never-r thought to see a choild o' moine lodg'd loike this!"

"Master Holyoke has done me great honor," answered the widow, coldly, "of which I trust I

am not unmindful; but in the matter you propose I cannot oblige him."

"Eh, ma'am!" exclaimed Goody Surriage in loud-mouthed dismay at this unexpected blow; "ye will not ha' her?"

"I grieve to say," returned Mrs. Ruck, shaking her head emphatically, "it is quite out of the question."

"Mer-rcy upon us! the fat is all in the foire!" cried the amazed fishwife; "but," she continued, turning to make one more appeal, "'f ye knew what a koind 'n' loight-her-rted creatur' she is, our Ag—"

"I have heard her good qualities rehearsed by Master Holyoke," returned the widow, scanning Agnes with a keen and by no means prepossessed air; "but I care not to take a stranger into my family."

"Ther' now yer roight; a str-raunger 's one thing, but our Ag—"

"My household," continued the widow, without heeding the interruption, "is ordered after time-honored rules which I could not suffer to be set aside."

"An' d'ye think, ma'am, Ag Surriage is apt to tur-rn ye topsy-tur-rvy?"

"It would, moreover," pursued Mrs. Ruck, quite oblivious of the dame's dramatic interjections, "be a great care and responsibility which at my age I am not willing to undertake."

"Ay, but—"

"Enough, enough, dame; let 's have done!" interposed Frankland, who perhaps after ten minutes'

careful study of the mistress of the house was not displeased the negotiations should fail. "'T is useless to press the matter since Mrs. Ruck is unwilling. Come, let us say good-day, then, for we have no time to lose."

"Tt—tt—tt!" exclaimed Goody Surriage, making with her tongue against the roof of her mouth a significant sound of regret; "'t is a gr-ret—a gr-ret pity, when Ag ud be out o't most por-rt o' the toime at school, 'n' his honor-r ther' stonds ready to pay ony pr-rice at a' fur-r her lodgin',—tt—tt—tt!"

"Ahem!" coughed the widow, with a sudden change of countenance. "I knew not—that is, 't is you, then, sir," turning to the Collector, "who are to be chargeable for—for— "

"All costs and expenses," said Frankland, finishing the halting sentence; "but since we have your answer," he continued, taking his hat from the reluctant Mercy, "there is no need to trespass further on your patience."

"But I—pardon me—I knew not the matter was so urgent. If there be—that is—I fain would discuss it more at length," stammered Mrs. Ruck, rubbing her nose with an air of discomfiture.

"To what purpose, ma'am, since your mind is made up?"

"There might be—I am not wont to despatch affairs of moment in so brief a fashion; I spoke in haste and upon first impression."

"Ay, ay!" interposed Goody Surriage, rendered very anxious by Frankland's move to go; "hor-rken now, yer honor-r, she be goin' to say somethin'!"

"If," pursued the widow, with a watchful eye upon Frankland, "as 't is said, the girl is to be absent so much of the time at school, why, it puts the matter upon a new basis, and there is good ground for re-consideration."

"Ground there may be," returned Frankland, with ill-controlled impatience, "but very brief time for it; the question must needs be settled out of hand."

"Thet must it," interposed Goody Surriage, "fur my goodman is waiting below in the ketch, and must set sail before sundown; but oi budge not a foot fro' this town till Ag ha' a roof over-r her head, oi worrnt ye."

The widow fidgeted in her chair, and cast a calculating look at Agnes.

"If you have nothing further to say — " began Frankland, chafing at the delay.

"Why, sir, I like not such urgency."

"There is no help for it, madam."

"Such being the case," said the widow, hesitatingly, "and in consideration of Master Holyoke, whom I should grieve to disoblige, I will so far run counter to all my habits and prejudices as to receive her on probation and under proper conditions."

"That will not do," said Frankland, firmly.

"You cannot expect me to undertake such a charge without limit; and there must needs be terms, sir, I suppose," retorted the widow, dissembling with effort her vexation.

"Assuredly; and they shall be briefly these: you shall receive Miss Surriage — "

A slight blush passed over Agnes's face at the first

use of this honorary title in connection with her name, and she cast a deprecating look at the widow, who was too intent on the Collector to heed her.

"—here present, into your family, give her the best your house affords, both in fare and lodging, and see to it, moreover, that she has at all times due attendance; for all which you shall be promptly paid any fit sum you may choose to demand."

"Hor-rken ye to thet, ma'am! What ha' oi told ye?" exclaimed Goody Surriage, triumphantly.

"For the rest," continued Frankland, peremptorily, "you are to have nothing to do with her movements. She is to come and go at her own free will, and order her life after the advice of the friends here in town who have her education in charge."

Mrs. Ruck was silent, and bit her lips with chagrin. The conversation had taken a very unexpected turn. Having the game at first entirely in her own hands, she had seen it pass into those of her strange visitors. Quite without precedent, she found herself submitting quietly to dictation; yet, under the pressure of a still stronger passion than resentment, she curbed her temper and held her tongue.

"Do you accede to these terms, madam?" asked the Collector, after a moment's silence.

"The measure of compensation seems not to have been included," answered the widow, evasively.

"That remains for you to fix; pray you name it at once."

"I would not undertake such a charge, sir," began the widow, with a gleam of triumph in her eye, "short of four guineas a month."

"You shall have it," said the Collector, quietly.

"Eh! I — you — " stammered Mrs. Ruck, aghast at the instant acceptance of her extortionate demand.

"I accept the terms, and the bargain is settled. So now, dame," — to Goody Surriage, — "set your heart at rest, and go home in peace, to report to your parson! And you, madam," — to Mrs. Ruck, — "please hold yourself in readiness to receive your new lodger this very night. Come, lass," — to Agnes, — "let us go and see about your luggage."

The three accordingly bowed and courtesied themselves out, leaving the discomfited widow to repent her own short-sightedness in not charging them double the price for her lodgings.

CHAPTER X.

"FINE FEATHERS."

"PRAY you have patience a minute more, ma'am; there needs a knot of ribbon here yet, and that curl in the neck is to be lowered, — so; there, now, 't is done at last! I can go no further. Madam will not hear of powder, she thinks you too young; but had I my own way, trust me, I'd whiten your head to the hue of chalk, the better to set off that pair of shining black eyes. Ay, and clap a bouncing patch here under the left temple to draw notice to the blooming roses on your cheek. Oh, my, ma'am," continued the enthusiastic abigail, drawing back to study the effect of her handiwork, "what a beauty I could make of you!"

Agnes rose from the seat where she had been sitting submissively under the manipulation of Mrs. Shirley's maid, and posed for a final review before the critical gaze of that experienced tire-woman.

"In my own humble judgment, ma'am, your hoop is too small by half; one gets but a scant glimpse of your ankles; and, with all due respect to my mistress, your canary gown would be better set off with a petticoat of puce-color than that washed-out blue, though 't is as fine a bit of brocade as one would wish

to see. Hark!" she cried, stopping suddenly to listen; "there goes mistress's bell, and she 'll not bear to be kept waiting. Deary me! but I 'd give all my old shoes to hear her cry out when first she claps eye on you."

Left to herself, Agnes approached the mirror and stood gazing dumfounded at the change which had been wrought in her appearance. Scarcely did she recognize her own form and features. From the dowdy fisher-girl of an hour before she had been transformed, as with the waving of a wand, into the semblance of a woman of fashion.

With the natural ingenuous delight of the butterfly newly come forth from its chrysalis, she fluttered her finery and spread wide the wings of her glory. Turning this way and that, peeping curiously over her shoulder to get every effect of her beautiful draperies, now advancing, now retreating, with sober or with mincing step, to the music of her pattering little heels, she passed a half-hour of purely feminine rapture. Turning then with lips still wearing a smile of pleased vanity, her eye fell by chance upon her own simple dress thrown in a heap upon a neighboring chair. In a flash, forgetful of finery and furbelows, she flung herself upon the floor, and burying her face in those coarse garments broke into a violent fit of weeping.

Presently the door opened and Mrs. Shirley entered. Her first look of astonishment gave place instantly to one of entire comprehension of the scene. Stooping to put her arm about the sobbing girl, she said quietly: —

"If you would like better, my child, you shall wear your own gown."

"No," cried Agnes, starting up; "por-rdon me, ma'am! oi meant not to blubber-r. 'T is a grond 'n' a beautifu' gown; oi thonk ye 'n' his honor-r fur 't, 'n' fur a'yer koindness."

"You must remember, too, that we are all your friends here."

"Oi do; thet oi do, mor-rnin' 'n' noight. Oi know not what ails me; 't was somethin' come over-r me sudden loike. Oi thought o' th' old place 'n' mother-r 'n' the young uns 'n' Job, 'n' a' at once it made a baby o' me."

"It does credit to your heart, my child. I would not have you forget your old home and friends. I would have you often think of them, but not with tears."

"No, oi 'll blubber-r no mor-re; oi ha' nuthin' to blubber-r for. Yer moinded to make a leddy o' me; oi know not what 'll come o't, but," she concluded with a touch of pride, "oi 'll try to gi' ye no cause to repent yer pur-rpose."

"That 's right, my child. Be faithful to the duties God has allotted you, and you will have no cause for tears or unhappiness," returned Mrs. Shirley, studying with a gratified sidelong glance the details of Agnes's toilet while she mechanically pronounced this moral truism. "But come," she suddenly concluded; "Mr. Shirley arrived a good half-hour ago, and will grow impatient for his supper. Let us go down."

Thus speaking, she led the way out of the cham-

ber upon an open gallery running around three sides of the great hall, which, rising from the floor to the very roof, occupied the main body of the house. On the remaining side the wall was broken by large windows and folding-doors of glass, which afforded a wide, unbroken prospect of the distant sea. In the corner a staircase with an elegantly carved balustrade led down to the lower story.

"Walk about here for a space and look out of the windows until you dry your eyes, my dear," said Mrs. Shirley, when they reached the floor of the hall; "and I will come for you presently."

Passing on herself to a small ante-room on the right of the vestibule, she found his Excellency had brought home a guest to supper.

Agnes meantime walked up and down the great hall in the waning light, recovering from her emotion and getting used to the constraint of her new finery. She had now been a guest in the Governor's mansion for more than a week. Mrs. Shirley having found her at the Widow Ruck's in a doleful state of dumps, with motherly kindness brought her straightway home to the more cheerful atmosphere of a large and bustling household. Here, despite Goody Surriage's assurances, the opportunity, as we have seen, had been improved of providing her a wardrobe more in keeping with her new sphere of life.

Her reverie was presently disturbed by a servant passing through the hall to announce supper; and directly afterwards Mrs. Shirley came ushering in the two gentlemen on their way to the dining-room.

"See!" she cried, with a touch of playfulness,

leading them towards Agnes, who stood motionless in the midst of the hall, "I have a surprise in store for you, — a young lady to supper. Will it please your Excellency to be presented, — and you, Mr. Frankland?"

Both gentlemen made profound congees before the stately figure of the young girl outlined like a silhouette against the great window. Before any one could speak, the butler threw wide open the door of the dining-room, and the blaze of the chandelier within fell full upon the little group.

"Agnes!" cried Frankland, breathless with astonishment.

"Impossible!" ejaculated the Governor.

"Quite possible," cried his wife, laughing; "but enough of this scrutiny. Come, my dear," she continued, passing her arm about the embarrassed girl, "they shall stare at you no more; we will give them something better to do."

But supper proved an insufficient distraction. Both those polished gentlemen sadly forgot their manners, and so shamelessly scanned the blushing maiden, that her hostess at last mercifully found some pretext to excuse her from the table.

"Fie, gentlemen!" she cried, when Agnes was gone. "Could you not let the poor child have her supper in peace?"

"Why, if you bring such a siren to the table," protested her husband, "you must take the consequences."

"This proves the adage that 'fine feathers make fine birds.' Here has she been sitting under your

very eyes for a week and you have not deigned to cast so much as a look at her."

"I did note her eyes were fine," pleaded his Excellency, "though they were for the most part downcast; but as for her figure, it was as well hidden in those duds she wore as a statue in a block of marble."

"I would humbly apologize for my own ill-breeding," said Frankland; "but indeed I was quite lost in amazement."

"You are acquitted, and justified too. She is a great beauty; it well-nigh took my own breath, I assure you, when I first beheld her."

"She has not her match in the province," exclaimed the Governor, enthusiastically. "Indeed, for such combined perfections of face and figure I profess neyer to have seen her equal, save," he added, as he caught the keen eye of his spouse fixed upon him, "always, of course, one who — "

"A timely exception, sir," interrupted his wife, nodding demurely; "but now, Mr. Frankland, we must set to work straightway to untwist that abominable *br-r-r* from her tongue."

"I will go in search of a tutor to-morrow," said the Collector.

"You need not; for here is the very man for your purpose. Listen," cried his hostess, drawing from her pocket a copy of the "Evening Post" and reading the following advertisement: —

"Mr. Peter Pelham, who has been from Boston these nine years past under the tuition of accomplished professors in the art of music, is now returned and ready to attend

ladies and gentlemen as a tutor in that art on the harpsichord and spinet, or offers his attendance at his father's house (or school) in Leverett's Lane, near King's Street, to teach the rudiments of psalmody, Hymns, Anthems, etc."

Frankland readily accepted the suggestion, and next day accordingly went with Agnes to wait upon Master Pelham, whom they found in very comfortable quarters close by a little inlet long ago filled up and built over with the solid and stately buildings which line the present Congress Street.

Master Pelham, to Agnes's great relief, proved by no means a formidable person. During his long residence abroad, moreover, he had acquired, it seems, besides his music and his polished manners, divers other accomplishments; for he took occasion to announce to them that he was presently to open a small and very select class in dancing, after the method taught in the French capital.

He readily undertook the charge of Agnes's musical studies; and furthermore, at Frankland's whispered request, engaged specially to train her in correct and elegant enunciation. Arrangements were also made that the head usher in his father's school, under the same roof, should give her private instruction in writing, reading, and casting accounts. As she was, moreover, to join the class in dancing, and begin the study of drawing under Master Pelham himself, every provision seemed to have been made to fit her in time to cope with the most accomplished fine ladies of the day.

To all these details Agnes paid little heed; her eyes were fixed with engrossing interest upon the

harpsichord, and her mind filled with delight at the thought that she was to be taught the magic art of using it.

After leaving Master Pelham's, as she had finished her visit at the Shirleys', Frankland conducted her back to Mrs. Ruck's, prepared on the morrow to enter upon the duties and difficulties of her new life.

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE AT TILESTON STREET.

WHATEVER chagrin the Widow Ruck may have felt at not making a better bargain with Frankland was set down by that conscientious person to the account of moral discipline, and not suffered to abate, by a jot or tittle, the fullest measure of justice in her dealings with Agnes. The new lodger was duly installed in the best chamber in the house, but not, however, before she had been profoundly impressed with its peculiar sanctity.

"This room has not been used," explained the widow, as she ushered Agnes into the darkened chamber, "since my late beloved husband deceased here."

"Eh!" exclaimed the startled girl, stopping on the threshold, and looking timorously about in the dim nooks and corners.

"Note the furniture," continued the widow; "there's nothing like it in the house! That tester-bed — come closer, that you may see — was my own great-grandmother's, and brought over from England; mark the curious carving of the posts! This silken comforter was quilted by my mother, and stuffed — lift it in your hand — with eider-down; the like is not to be had now for love nor money.

The bed is of live-geese feathers," continued the enthusiastic housewife, giving it a probative poke, "bequeathed to me by my late grandmother, who herself passed away upon it."

"But," interposed Agnes in faltering tones, "ha' ye no other-r place to lodge me? Oi — oi 'd loike better-r ye gev me some bit o' a room wher' — "

"The sheets," pursued the widow, turning down the upper one and passing it between her experienced thumb and finger, "are of the best linen, of my own spinning, and have been laid up in lavender these twenty years. Yonder chest of drawers was fetched by my uncle, a ship-captain, from foreign parts, forty years ago, and not a scratch on it yet; and this table of satin-wood," she went on, giving it a passing dust with her apron, — "you may see your face in it almost as well as the mirror above, which is of the finest French plate," she concluded, knuckling the glass.

"Ay, ay," murmured the awe-struck lodger; "but oi 'll ha' some chaumber-r thet 's not so gr-rond."

"No," returned the widow, firmly; "'t was contracted you should have the best; and here it is, at your service."

"But — but," stammered Agnes, "ther's no knowin' at a' what hor-rm oi moight do here."

"If you take heed — *proper* heed," returned Mrs. Ruck, marking the emphatic word with a nod of her head and a tightening of her lips, "you need do no harm; but once begin to cast things out of order and knock them about, and they 'll soon go to destruction."

Thus warned, the hapless lodger took possession. For weeks she entered the awful chamber with bated

breath, tiptoed about in the brooding twilight, scarce daring to lay hand upon the precious furniture, and climbed at night into the bed sanctified by the mortal release of Mrs. Ruck's progenitors, with fear and trembling.

Daily use, however, makes sad havoc of awe, as of divers other cobwebs of the imagination. The free and independent spirit of the young fisher-girl soon rose above the thraldom of mere things. Deeply concerned with certain vital questions relating to her new life, she presently forgot the grandeur of her room, and from the hour when she reached the point of daring to fling wide the shutters and let in the light of day, began to feel at home in it. On the second story and southeast corner of the house, it commanded a wide and picturesque view. To the north, beyond the estuary of the Charles, lay the sloping hills of Noddle's Island, rich now in their dress of autumnal browns. On the hither shore the eastern coast-line of the peninsula writhed in and out like a vast terminal serpent from North Point on the left to the Old Sconce on the right and Windmill Point in the farther distance. Before the southern windows, obstructed only by an occasional two-story building on Hanover Street, lay outspread the South End from the Town Dock to far-off Frog Lane, bristling with the many characteristic features of provincial Boston, — the fine new hall just given by the munificent Faneuil; the Town House; the frowning fortifications of Fort Hill; the shabby little King's Chapel; a chance angle of the old stone jail, seen between a projecting corner of the "Manifesto Church"

and the roof of the "Old Cocked Hat;" the towering steeple of the Old South; the royal colors flying above Deacon Shem Drowne's Indian image on the distant Province House; and last, but not least, farther to the west, looming up in virgin wildness, triple-peaked Beacon Hill, over which Agnes used to watch the days fade away in varying gloom or splendor as she sat and mused upon the changed conditions of her life; mused upon the past, now so long ago, not without a pang at the thought of her last parting with Job; mused haply until all pangs and regrets faded from her heart with the incoming of other and sweeter thoughts, — thoughts of the present and of the future, bringing a strange soft lustre to her eye and deepening the tender glow upon her cheek.

Such thoughts it may have been which carried her scathless through all the rigor and discipline of the Ruck household, where her transgressions were of course frequent.

"What is here?" the widow had at first almost daily occasion to cry "Mercy, is it you who have come in with foul feet and besmirched the floor to this filthy state?"

The innocent Mercy, who had never in her life dared commit such an offence, would look up and stammer, "I — I knew not that I did."

"Come here, then, and see! A brute beast would know better; look! 'T is fitter work for a shovel than the mop!"

"Beloike 't is oi ha' done it," Agnes would at length exclaim, with reluctant but heroic candor; for the widow's wrath was not to be lightly encountered.

On the other hand, Mrs. Ruck, whether withheld by thoughts of the peremptory young gentleman down in the Custom House, of the watchful, keen-eyed matron yonder in Roxbury, or by certain indications of a fearless, intractable spirit in the offender herself, took care not to brandish too constantly the rod of discipline, even over the vicarious shoulders of uncomplaining Mercy.

The widow, however, knew how to lighten without thundering, and Agnes soon grew weatherwise in facial signs. Nor was discipline of this modified sort unwholesome; the exquisite neatness of Mrs. Ruck's household and the habits of cleanliness she inculcated were no superfluous features in the training of the neglected fisher-girl. Neither did Agnes prove an inapt pupil. Keenly sensible of her own defects, she was ever on the alert to take advantage of any hint that could further her progress. All her surroundings thus became educational influences of differing values. But among these various incentives none wrought perhaps a more immediate and profound moral effect than her personal finery. To live up to the standard of her hoops and damask, of her laces and brocades, to sustain herself at the perilous social elevation to which she had been lifted by her pattering little heels, became a controlling purpose of her life, and, in certain senses, a natural and noble aim.

The impulse to all this had been given by Frankland, consciously or unconsciously, in that moment when he had thrust down the barriers of caste and called her up to a higher social plane with that magic

title, — *Miss Surriage.* Meantime, whatever profit or advantage Agnes may have derived from the discipline of the Ruck household, she herself was in turn an object of the profoundest interest to one of its members. Mercy Ruck was never tired of admiring the beauty of the new lodger, — wondering at her rich clothes, her blunt manners, her broad speech, and, in fine, at the mystery of incongruity which surrounded her. The spinster's big, eager eyes would furtively follow the unconscious Agnes as she went hither and thither about the house, or rest upon her in absorbed fascination as she sat conning her tasks. On better acquaintance she ventured to steal up into her young guest's room on some professed errand, and there, unawed by the widow's presence, linger for a little chat.

On her first visit she stared in amazement to see the shutters thrown back, and from her look of interest, as she placed herself at the window, it was evident that the view was a revelation.

"If 't was n't for the 'Revenge' meeting-house," she said, craning her neck to catch a glimpse of something beyond, "you might see, might n't you — "

"Eh?"

"The place where he stays?"

Agnes looked curious.

"Likely he 's a relation of yours?" continued the visitor, with a furtive glance at the puzzled lodger.

"Who 's thet?"

"Mr. — what-d' ye-call-him — the fine young gentleman who brought you here."

"Mister-r Fr-ronklond kin o' moine?" cried Agnes,

with a burst of laughter. "Bless the her-rt 'n' soul o' ye, not he!"

"Oh!" was the not very discomfited comment.

"He 's a gret lor-rd, or somethin' hoigh 'n' moighty, is he."

"P'raps I can see it better from here," muttered the visitor, crossing to the other window as if still busied with the view. "A great lord is he, and an old friend of yours?" she concluded, with the air of repeating something that had just been said.

"'Friend'!" echoed Agnes, pausing over the word as if it suggested some new thought to her mind. "Ay, oi hope he is thet — but not so ver-ry old, nuther-r."

"Oh! I only thought — but 't is no concern of mine. What a beautiful tucker you have on, Miss Agnes!"

"Ay, the Governor's leddy bought it," returned Agnes, with a careless glance downward; "but at Mister-r Fr-ronklond's chor-rge."

"'T is wonderfully wrought," said Mercy, drawing near and examining the needlework with experienced eyes. "Does he give you many such rare gifts?"

"This — 't is nothin' to others oi ha' got; look ye here!" cried Agnes enthusiastically, catching up her silken gown; "he ha' gev me this!"

"And he pays your charges here?"

"Ay, an' at school; 't was thet oi ha' come for, — to be a scholard."

"To be sure!" cried Mercy, with a sudden and peculiar change of tone. "He thinks of you as a child, then; and you are not very old yet?" she concluded, with a searching glance at Agnes's face.

"Fifteen 'n' past."

"I see."

The visitor looked out of the window and mused several moments in silence before she broke out with: —

"He has a dainty way of talking; I like to hear him. Does he talk much to you?"

"No — yes — not a gret deal," answered Agnes, conscientiously; "yet he speaks when ther's occasion."

"It 's no concern of mine, only I was wonderin'," continued the visitor, still busily looking out of the window.

"Eh — ye say?"

"Nothin'; I was only wonderin' what he would be likely to talk about — you bein' so young, an' he, as you say, a great lord so."

"Oh, onythin' at all, loike onybody," answered Agnes, not unwilling to continue the talk; "but 't is much o' my singin' he talks o' late."

"*You* — sing?"

"Ay, 't is thet mainly oi 'm bein' lor-rned, — to ha' my voice tr-rained."

"Oh! Would you mind singing to me?"

"No, oi 'd not," returned Agnes, striking up without more ado a well-known ballad.

"I'm obliged to you," said Mercy, studying the young singer's face attentively. "I know that tune myself," she continued, humming the air with catarrhal effects. "And so he likes that tune, does he?"

"Oi know not 'f he loike 't or no."

"But you said — "

"No, 't is my voice he 's ever-r pr-raisin'."

"What do they do to your voice at school?"

"Jus' nothin' but forever-r sol-fa-in' 'n' mi-do-in'."

"Oh!" was the visitor's only comment, as she still continued gazing from the window and softly humming the same air.

Presently there was heard the loud slamming of a door below, when she started hurriedly to her feet, exclaiming: —

"There! he 's gone; I must go down."

"'He'?" repeated Agnes.

"The Elder, — you seen him yet?"

"No, oi did n't."

"You will, then," pursued Mercy, turning at the door, "for" — she came across the room on tiptoe and concluded in a whisper — "he comes a-courtin'."

"You?" asked Agnes, with irrepressible interest.

"No," returned Mercy, suppressing a sigh, — "*her*."

"Mrs. Ruck?"

With a cautioning finger on her lips the spinster nodded assent and slipped silently from the room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HARPSICHORD.

AGNES'S progress in music was marked and rapid. It gladdened the soul of worthy master Pelham to find one among his pupils who was gifted, not only with a voice passing sweet and rich, but with that far rarer endowment, musical intuition. Little indeed did the complacent tutor suspect that his pupil owed her extraordinary advance to an organization rich in imagination, ardor, susceptibility, and the nameless subtler qualities that go to the make-up of an artist, rather than to his dry and conventional teachings.

In her other studies, with a like unwearied diligence, Agnes showed differing aptitudes. She had no genius for spelling, and still less for accounts; but she took kindly to writing, showed touches of spirit in her drawings, and danced with marvellous elegance. But the hardest task Master Pelham set to himself was untwisting the *br-r-r* from her tongue. Long and patiently did he labor; long and patiently did Agnes herself strive to shake off that vocal wild bramble of Marblehead.

Daily she went home repeating all along the way some obstinate word or phrase. Daily from her high window-seat, looking forth over the little town, did

she say over and over certain words and syllables the teacher had given her as models.

Mrs. Shirley, too, kindly lent a hand in correcting divers inelegancies of pronunciation and phrasing; but Frankland made a sad blunder when one day he incidentally ventured to play the pedagogue.

"And how does my fair maid of the Fountain this morning?" he asked on one of his early visits to the Widow Ruck's.

"Oi hed a hor-rd toime waitin' so long to see ye," answered Agnes, ingenuously.

"'A hor-rd toime,' did you?" he returned, playfully mimicking her; "and we shall have 'a hor-rd toime,' I fear, in getting the King's English to run smoothly from your tongue. Come, now, let 's have a lesson," he continued, seating himself by her side. "Say *hard*, my dear!"

"No; 'f ye mock me oi 'll say nothin'," she cried, suddenly flashing up.

"Tut, tut! I was but trying to help you."

"'F ye cannot under-rston' me, sen' me bock agin to them that can!"

"Why, how now, little one? You go off like gunpowder!" cried Frankland, laughing outright at this sudden explosion.

"Oi 'll not stay her' to be made a butt o'," cried Agnes, starting to her feet, with tears of wounded pride and anger in her eyes.

"There, there; I most humbly beg pardon! I 'll grovel at your feet; I 'll cover my head with sackcloth and ashes. You shall be made a butt of no more; and if Master Pelham or Mrs. Shirley dare

correct your speech again they shall hear from me, I promise you. Sit you down now, and I will dry up those salty damp drops upon your cheek," cried Frankland, approaching with his lace handkerchief and an air of mock contrition to wipe the eyes of the indignant girl, while unrestrained merriment still gleamed in his own.

"Oi 'll woipe my own eyes 'n' mend my own speech!" she cried, starting away from him and flouncing angrily from the room.

With a look of real concern Frankland called after her, striving to make his peace. But it was too late. Paying no heed to his protestations, she fled upstairs and took refuge in her own room.

Equally interested and amused by this unexpected touch of character, Frankland carefully adjusted his cocked hat over a new peruke and laughed softly to himself as he walked away. The impression the incident made upon him may be gathered from the fact that on his way home he bought and sent to Agnes a box of imported comfits as a peace-offering.

Next day, coming forth from the great meeting in Faneuil Hall, where Master John Lovell had been pronouncing a funeral oration upon the late Peter Faneuil, the Collector was joined by Master Pelham.

"And what did you think of the oration?"

"Why, sir, I would not be quoted in the matter," answered the cautious schoolmaster, looking around to see that nobody was in ear-shot; "but to my mind it was hardly equal to so great an occasion."

"In what was it lacking?" asked the Collector, amused at this touch of professional jealousy.

"In everything, sir, that goes to a great performance."

"But to come down to particulars?"

"In form and substance alike it was wofully at fault."

"In form, indeed, it may have come short of the highest Attic elegance; but in substance —"

"Substance, sir! There was no substance. He had hardly begun and folks settled themselves to listen, expecting every instant to hear something, when he made an end of it."

"Yes, it was perhaps somewhat brief, but delivered with much force and dignity."

"Like an owl, — like a very owl, to my mind. Why, in France, sir, I give you my word, they would have laughed him off the rostrum for such an attempt."

"Hm-m-m, perhaps; the French are different; but," continued Frankland, demurely, "'t is, at any rate, a great honor to be chosen out of the whole town to perform such an office, and without honorarium, too."

"'Without honorarium'! Poh, poh! sir, the town will pay dearly for it in the end, mark my words!"

"How will that come about?"

"Why, sir," answered the jealous pedagogue, quite unconscious that he was being baited, — "this between ourselves, mind you, — Lovell has been these years past grumbling about his poor pay."

"And what then?"

"Now he will do what he has long been threatening, — come boldly forward with a claim for more

salary, which the town cannot with good grace refuse. Mark my words, I say, and watch proceedings at the next town-meeting!"

Arrived at the door of the Custom House, the Collector suddenly changed the subject by asking how the new pupil was getting on.

Master Pelham took a pinch of snuff and summoned his professional reserve. He began guardedly, but, being pushed with questions, grew more emphatic as he went on with the account of Agnes's progress, and seemed, indeed, fast winding himself up to a pitch of positive enthusiasm, when the Collector was called away by a business summons.

Later in the day, as Frankland sat writing in his private office, he was interrupted by a sudden altercation at the door.

"You cannot see him, ma'am," said the voice of his confidential clerk.

"Ther's somebody insoide wi' him, ye say?"

"He is engaged."

"Wor-rkin'?"

"Yes."

"Oi ha' but a wor-rd to say."

"You cannot go in, I tell you; I will deliver any message you may leave, but —"

"Oi 'll deliver my own message," cried Agnes, swinging the astonished clerk from her path like a feather and boldly entering the room.

There, walking straight up to Frankland's desk, she said with flushed cheeks and downcast eyes: —

"Oi ha' come to ask yer por-rdon; oi wor-r a fool yester-rdoy thet oi could not better-r take a bit o'

funnin'. Oi ha' more sense now; oi 'm sorry fur-r what oi said to ye, 'n' shamed oi am, too, after a' ye ha' done fur me, 'n' oi hope ye 'll forgi' me, 'n' never-r be thinkin' oi 'm such an wofu' fool to get moddened for nothin'."

Surprised at this sudden entrance and long, breathless apology, Frankland could not for a moment speak. Taking advantage of his silence, Agnes drew from her pocket the box of comfits, and laying it on the table, said, with an air of dignity: —

"Oi ha' brought back yer gift; oi could not take it; oi wor-r in the wr-rong, 'n' ye hed good worrnt fur choidin' me. 'F oi 'd just cause to be moddened wi' ye, 't is not fur th' loike o' these oi 'd for-rget it; oi 'm not a choild to be coaxed wi' plums."

Whirling about with these words she hurried to the door regardless of a chair which Frankland had silently placed for her.

"Stay!" he cried peremptorily.

She turned on the threshold and hesitated: —

"They told me ye wor-r busy."

"Sit you down here! I would talk with you," said the Collector, calmly authoritative.

She came back with a shamefaced air; the impulse which had carried her thus far all spent, she knew not how to behave.

"I have been hearing good reports of you," said the Collector, gravely. "Master Pelham has just been talking with me, and says you are making marvellous advance in your music."

"He told ye thet?" she cried, with a burst of delight at this unsolicited praise.

"Yes, and much besides; he has great hopes of you; he thinks you will do very much better yet. He says you not only have a fine voice and a correct ear, but that you study hard and faithfully at the tasks he sets you."

"Oh, ef mother could but hear-r thet, she 'd be the pr-roud woman!" cried the delighted girl, not yet far enough advanced in her breeding to know the vulgarity of such a display of feeling.

"She shall hear it!" said Frankland. "I will write her a letter myself, and she can get her wiseacre of a parson to read it."

"Ay, ay, the minister-r too; what 'll he say to thet?"

"But," continued Frankland, quietly, "Master Pelham says that in order to keep on as you have begun, there is need you should have a harpsichord of your own, that you may practise at home."

"A hā-ārpsichor-rd o' my own!" ejaculated Agnes; "the mon 's r-ravin'; his wits is gone."

A furtive gleam in his eyes and a suppressed twitching about the lips showed with what effort Frankland maintained gravity to reply: —

"On the contrary, the good man seemed to me quite rational, and talked with rare good sense. Moreover, his commands must be presently obeyed; and nothing remains but to consult Mrs. Ruck to see in what part of the house she will have the new instrument disposed."

"A hā-ārpsichor-rd o' my own!" repeated Agnes to herself, quite deaf to everything but that astounding and inconceivable fact.

"So pray tell the good woman from me," continued Frankland, watching the absorbed face before him with covert delight, "that I will wait upon her to-morrow afternoon on a matter of business. Meantime," he continued, taking up the box of comfits, "since you scorn my poor gift yourself, please bestow it with my compliments upon Miss — Miss — What 's-her-name? — the elderly virgin that haunts the parlor yonder."

"Miss Mer-rcy? Ay, she will set gret store by 'em, too, fur she 's deep in love wi' yer honor-r!"

"The deuce she is!" cried the astonished Collector, as Agnes, without further explanation, courtesied and withdrew, murmuring to herself all the way home, over and over again: —

"A hā-ārpsichor-rd o' my own!"

Next day, directly after dinner, Mercy began to show signs of agitation. She came to her mother breathlessly, asking if a fire was to be laid in the best room.

"Certainly not," answered the widow, composedly.

Mercy looked shocked and puzzled; what could her mother mean by such indifference. Not daring to expostulate, however, she glanced critically around the keeping-room, as if to realize its effect upon a stranger. As time wore on, she grew more disturbed, wandered aimlessly about the room, and went repeatedly to the window, glancing now and then nervously at her mother. When the clock struck three, unable longer to control herself, she said, almost sharply, "If you think of changin' your cap — "

"I do not."

"Why, Mother Ruck — have you — don't you remember?"

"Eh?"

"He — that Mr. Frankland 's comin' to-day?"

"What if he be? I am decent."

Glancing over her mother's neat but well-worn gown with a look of profound mortification, and feebly stammering an inarticulate protest, Mercy straightway withdrew, as if to wash her hands of all responsibility in maintaining the family credit.

Frankland soon arrived, and, to the chagrin of Mercy, who was hovering about the hall and staircase in a tense state of curiosity, he shut the door behind him as he entered the room.

"My business with you, madam," he began at once, after the exchange of greetings, "concerns Miss Surriage."

The widow bowed, and produced some knitting from a bag on her arm.

"I am happy to say," continued the Collector, by way of a diplomatic preface, "that she finds herself content with you here, and reports the fairest treatment at your hands."

"I am well pleased to hear she is satisfied," returned the widow, without elation.

"My purpose this afternoon is to ask of you a further favor in her behalf."

The widow looked expectant, but did not commit herself to concessions by the softening of a line.

"Her teacher, Master Pelham, has advised me," continued Frankland, "in view of her notable prog

ress in the study of music, that she should have a harpsichord at home."

"And do you come hither, sir, to propose," began the widow, with an ominous inflection, "that I should take the fiddling, jig-playing thing into my house?"

"Why, not quite that," answered Frankland, diplomatically. "I came hither to confer with you upon the matter."

The widow shifted her needles with an air not very promising to the success of the petition.

"I need not remind you, madam," continued the Collector, feeling his way, "that a thing is good or bad according to the way it is used. Even the Holy Scriptures, as you know, have been perverted by evil men to —"

The widow made an impatient move, as if to interrupt, when her visitor adroitly went about upon another tack.

"Now, as you seem unacquainted with the instrument in question, let me assure you that 't is not at all like a fiddle, and that it is very rarely used for playing jigs."

"'T is nevertheless a begetter of lewd and sinful thoughts, and a device of the Evil One to lead men astray," interposed the widow, strongly.

"On the contrary, madam, I am persuaded 't is more often used to awaken the finer emotions."

"My sober and respectable roof has never been profaned by any such invention of Beelzebub."

"It would, of course," continued Frankland, calmly persistent, "be a just ground for some further rate of compensation."

At these words, whether mechanically or by design, the Collector drew from his pocket a well-filled purse and passed it softly from hand to hand as he talked.

"'T is not a question of compensation; 't is a question of resisting temptation and avoiding evil," answered the widow, looking resolutely away.

"But I assure you, madam, this instrument is now a common piece of furniture in the best families all over England. Nay, his Excellency the Governor has one yonder at his home in Roxbury."

By an opportune mischance the purse slipped through Frankland's fingers and fell with a clang of golden guineas to the floor.

"I have a daughter to be considered," objected the widow with subdued emphasis.

"The young — hem — the lady I have occasionally seen here?"

"The same, sir, — my only child."

"I would not for the world, madam, be the means of putting temptation in the way of any one," went on the Collector, idly banging the chair-leg in a carefully regulated *crescendo* with the swaying purse. "I would therefore propose that Miss Agnes should have the instrument set up in her own room."

There was a long pause. Frankland prudently held his peace. The widow knitted an entire round before saying, reflectively, "If that could be done — "

"Nothing easier, I assure you."

"It would of course make a difference — "

Frankland rose, as if the matter was concluded.

"But by no means reconcile me to the measure," concluded the widow with a saving clause.

"I shall not consider an extra guinea on the quarter's account an unreasonable charge for the accommodation," continued the Collector, affecting to disregard the foregoing.

"I will consider of the matter," said the widow, rubbing her nose with an uncertain air, as if not quite content with the result of the conference.

"Do so; and if I do not hear from you at the end of a week, I shall take the liberty of assuming that your decision is in my favor."

The retiring Collector was so busied in dissembling his satisfaction at having carried the point, that he failed to note a gaunt figure flitting up the staircase as he opened the door.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LESSON IN READING.

ALTHOUGH, as has been seen, Agnes promptly forgave Frankland for his thoughtless mimicry, she did not forget it. Wounded to the quick by the thought that she could be in any wise an object of ridicule to him, she henceforth bent all her energies to correct the uncouth tricks of her mother tongue.

With tenfold anxiety she now followed Master Pelham's instructions, noted more carefully Mrs. Shirley's little hints, watched and imitated the young ladies of fashion she met at dancing-school, until in the course of time and by dint of great effort she had so far overcome her chief and most flagrant faults that strangers no longer stared at her when she spoke.

She remarked this herself, and confided it to Mercy at one of their sittings, which had now become periodic. These were usually in the early morning, when the widow was busied following up her maids, and the lodger twisting up her abundant hair in the elaborate mode of the day; when, in fine, the conditions for comfortable gossip were at their best.

"They seemed not to note that I spoke different from the others," said Agnes, describing the behavior of some new acquaintances as she combed out a snarl.

"They must have been wanting in good manners had they seemed to note it," answered the ingenuous but maladroit Mercy.

"'Seemed to note it'?" repeated Agnes, suspiciously. "Would you then make me believe there is still cause for staring in my manner of speech?"

"Why, for the matter of starin', I cannot say; but it seems not altogether like other folks'."

"Such as it is, 't 'll have to serve my turn," replied Agnes, shortly.

Seeing that she had given offence, Mercy hastened to change the subject.

"Oh, but what think you, Miss Agnes? That ill-lookin' fellow I told you of last week — you laughed at me, remember — has been hanging about the street again, an' 't is surely this house he has his eye on; for mother found him leanin' over the fence last night as she came home from prayer-meetin'. She would have demanded his business, too, but that the Elder is a timorous man and hurried her on."

Agnes, perplexed with the adjustment of a braid, made no remark.

"He has some evil purpose, you may be sure," continued Mercy, propitiatingly handing a hairpin; "and if he be seen again, mother will give warnin' to the selectmen to send a constable after him."

"What should he want?" asked Agnes in an absent tone as she studied an effect in the mirror.

"Who knows? He has found out that — stay! there 's a loose lock hanging — that we are three lone women, and would rob us, no doubt."

"'T is more like he is some innocent stranger who

is wand'ring about to see the town. How does he look?"

"He has a villanous air," continued Mercy, going mechanically to the window as she spoke. "I tremble at sight of him; I would not set foot outside the door for worlds."

Agnes laughed aloud at so absurd a notion.

"It must be a terrible man would frighten me from going in and out my own door. As for this one, I have not yet set eyes on him, but—"

"Here he is now, then!" cried Mercy with a little shriek. "See the wretch, yonder!" she continued, pointing through the window. "See him peering over the garden fence and looking boldly up in my very face!"

Agnes jumped up and ran eagerly to look; but no sooner did she behold the man, than, uttering a loud cry, she rushed from the room.

Calling after her in vain, the astonished Mercy turned back to the window and presently beheld the excited lodger rush out of the house, up the garden path, and out upon the street with her half-dressed hair floating behind her in the breeze.

Meantime the strange man had disappeared, and Agnes presently came back with a baffled and disappointed air, but offered no explanation of her conduct.

For days afterwards, moreover, it was noted she kept an outlook from the window, haunted the garden, and lingered about the gate looking wistfully up and down the street in a way that excited Mercy's curiosity to a painful pitch. Attempts to sound her upon

the subject, however, proved fruitless, for she promptly and bluntly checked the first insinuating approach to it.

Meantime the watchful Mercy noted that the lodger's demeanor had changed; that she ate her meals in silence; that her eyes often wandered from her books and remained fixed in an abstracted stare on nothingness; that she no longer laughed and sang about the house as had been her wont.

"She 's got somethin' on her mind," said Mercy, driven to the extreme resource of confiding in her mother.

The widow was narrowing a heel, and went on with concentration counting her stitches. Having finished her round, she shifted her needles, adjusted the stationary one in a cob at her belt, and looked up with a blank expression at her expectant daughter.

"She 'd seen that loaferish man before, I tell you; she knew him, as sure as you 're sittin' there. And, mother," continued the excited spinster, looking about to see that the doors were shut, "do you know what *I* think?"

Not even a passing movement of curiosity disturbed the repose of the widow's face as she seamed and narrowed another entire round.

"*I* think he was lookin' for *her*."

"Fudge!"

Naturally discouraged by such a reception of her surmises, Mercy sought no longer the maternal confidence, but returned to a solitary study of the situation.

Meantime the situation speedily became complicated. One bright morning shortly after the disappearance of the mysterious loafer, Agnes was summoned to the door to see a visitor. Her surmise as to who it might be was confirmed on the way down by finding Mercy hovering about the upper landing, craning her neck over the balusters.

"Oh!" she exclaimed with a little start as the lodger came upon her. "Is it you? I happened to be comin' up an' — I wonder why he don't come in?"

The Collector noted Agnes's sober visage directly. "Why, how now?" he cried; "whence got you that dumpish look? Fie, fie! a young chick like you with the vapors! Cheer up! cheer up! and come to the door. Here is something to gladden your eyes!"

In obedience to this invitation Agnes stepped out just in time to see two stout serving-men deposit before the door what appeared to be a large box covered with a coarse blanket. She turned with an inquiring look to Frankland, who reached forward and pulled off the blanket, disclosing a fine new harpsichord.

There was a long minute of silence. The Collector's face was beaming. The two serving-men wore a broad grin of expectation; the eyes of all three were fixed upon the recipient, who showed herself, however, utterly wanting to the occasion. She stood dumb before the beautiful instrument; not a smile, not an exclamation, not a word of thanks escaped her The disappointed Collector was about to rally her, when he discovered that her eyes were swimming in tears. Motioning the men to carry the instrument into the house, he put forth his hand with a comforting

word and gently stroked Agnes's head, when instantly she burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

"Heyday! what 's the matter now?" he cried, taking her impulsively in his arms. "Is there anything to grieve you in what I have done?"

"No, no, no!" she sobbed convulsively.

"What afflicts you, then? Tell me."

Bending over the weeping girl to catch her answer, Frankland was startled by a dry cough overhead, and looking up beheld Mrs. Ruck gazing at them from her window, with Mercy in the background peering over her shoulder.

Paying no heed to their presence save by a cool stare, Frankland turned once more to Agnes; but the latter, startled by the ominous cough, flew from his embrace and up the steps, crying in a stifled voice,—

"I cannot thank ye; ye 're too good to me; ye 're a' the friend I have left in the world."

Puzzled at this outbreak, Frankland hesitated a moment as if about to follow her, but directly changing his purpose turned and walked thoughtfully away.

The incident was not without its effect. To the astonishment and bewilderment of Mercy, the lodger lapsed presently from her mood of dumps into one of unnatural gayety. She tripped up and down stairs on winged feet; she filled the house with song; she was garrulous and hilarious; she recklessly left open the doors, riotously tracked in mud upon the immaculate floors, and all the time went about blind as a bat to the widow's black looks, and deaf as a post to the severe upbraidings inflicted upon Mercy.

The widow's worst fears and misgivings were

realized. She consistently attributed all this undisciplined behavior on the part of the lodger to the malign influence of the harpsichord, which formidable instrument of evil had been straightway sent upstairs and bestowed in the lodger's own room. Mercy, although in a measure sharing her mother's prejudices, had other theories in the establishment of which she found herself helplessly adrift on a wide ocean of conjecture.

Frankland, meanwhile, concluding very naturally that the influences of the Ruck household were beginning to weigh too heavily on Agnes's spirits, came around the next day to take her off on a tramp to Cambridge, whither he was going on business. With an Englishman's love for exercise, he chose to walk, and Agnes, as he well knew, could hold her own upon the march.

Delighted with the invitation, she ran singing upstairs to kick off her high heels and slip into her walking-shoes, and presently they set forth.

What with singing duets, running races, and wandering for flowers, they found themselves so heated and out of breath before half the way was done that they gladly took advantage of a shady seat by the roadside to rest.

It chanced to be a spot where the road ran close to the river, which, bordered with green banks and hazel copses, crept away in sinuous course across the marshes to the sea.

Drawing a long breath of relief, Frankland threw himself down upon the grass, and presently, with a laughing apology, pulled off his wig.

Agnes uttered an exclamation at the change it made in his appearance.

"See what a fright I am!" he cried, loosening with his fingers his matted light-brown hair, which, thus tossed about, showed glints of color as if sanded with gold-dust.

"That ye 're not; ye 're far finer so," exclaimed Agnes, gazing with admiration at the comely head for the first time disclosed to her view. "I thought not ye wor so young."

"Yes, these topknots make us all one age, and they 're abominably hot, too; but we should be hopeless guys without 'em," said the Collector, catching up the discarded wig upon the end of his sword and hanging it on a neighboring branch.

Hardly were they seated and at ease, when a distant cloud of dust upon the highway betokened the approach of a vehicle. In a minute more they made out a chariot drawn by four horses and attended by mounted servants in livery.

"Who comes here?" said Frankland in a tone of annoyance. "A plague on them, whoever they be! for now I must needs don my wig; it shall never be said his Majesty's Collector of the Customs was seen by the roadside with a bare poll."

Rising as he spoke, he carelessly reached for his wig bobbing before him on the branch. Unhappily, a chance puff of wind, contesting the prize, swept it from the tree and carried it rolling down the slope to the river's brink.

With a cry of dismay the owner sprang after it; but before he had traversed half the distance an impish

zephyr caught up the big bunch of snow-white hair and tossed it like a fleck of foam upon the swiftly gliding current.

"Agnes, quick! quick! — come here, girl! — catch it!" cried the agitated Collector.

The situation, however, proved to be one which appealed more strongly to Agnes's sense of humor than her sympathy. Forgetful of her habitual respect, forgetful of her great obligation to her companion, she stood rooted to the bank, and with peals of irrepressible laughter watched the anxious Collector fishing for his precious wig.

"Eh, sir, — dear, dear, — make haste an' get it! The coach is upon us!"

"Get a branch! Come and help! quick! 'tis escaping me!"

"An — an ye killed me," cried Agnes, hysterically, "I — I could not budge."

"Have done with your folly," called the Collector, out of all patience. "'T is no funning matter, I tell you."

"Here — here they come!" cried Agnes, with a glance at the approaching carriage. "'T is his Excellency himself, wi' some other grandees."

"D——n his Excellency! 'T is my best London Ramillies, and not to be matched in the province."

Stirred to action by Frankland's vexation, Agnes at last came staggering down the slope, almost sobbing with laughter, and joined in the pursuit.

Stayed at last in its course by a projecting snag, the wig was caught and drawn safely to shore. Meantime his Excellency had gone thundering past,

too much engrossed with his guests to notice the wayfarers.

"Egad! we may as well sit down again while it dries," said Frankland, shaking the water from the dripping wig. "I am worse winded than before."

"I have to — to ask yer por-rdon; but — ugh! — ugh! — but I could n't help it, — I — I could n't, truly," gasped Agnes. "'T would 'a' made a saint above laugh to see ye wi' — wi' the bare poll an' the scared face, run—runnin' after it an' splashin' wi' the stick!"

"Oh, laugh away," answered Frankland, good-naturedly, as he threw himself upon the grass and disposed his head upon a fallen trunk. "Laugh as much as you like, now I have back my wig!"

"No, I ha' laughed enough," said Agnes, drawing out her handkerchief to wipe her eyes; "but ye may show ye forgive me now, an' render good for ill by readin' this for me," she concluded, picking up a letter she had drawn from her pocket with her handkerchief.

"Fie! cannot you read your own letters yet?"

"Ay, when they be fairly writ; but this is past makin' out. I know not who mother could ha' got for her clark."

Frankland with practised eye glibly enough read off Goody Surriage's humdrum account of domestic affairs and village gossip in Marblehead, and tossed it back to Agnes, saying: —

"Poh! that 's not hard; you need practice. Here," he continued, drawing several letters from his pocket and carelessly handing them over to her, "try your skill on these."

Agnes picked up the fluttering sheets, and opening the first which came to hand, read without much difficulty the following note: —

"'Mr. Thos. Hancock presents his compliments to Mr. Frankland, and requests the honor of his company at supper on Friday at six o'clock, post meridian.'"

"Very fairly done!" cried the teacher, approvingly. "Go on now with another."

Agnes, with a gratified smile at the commendation, next unfolded a thick and curiously folded sheet and began: —

"'My darling boy — '"

"Ah!" interposed the Collector, laughing, "my respected mamma; there 's good practice for you; no such smooth sailing as friend Hancock's note, I promise you."

"'Your last welcome letter,'" continued Agnes, spelling her way along, "'besides an assurance of your health and safety, — for which God be thanked! — brought me also a fuller account of your manner of life yonder in the wilderness, for which I am truly grateful. Clearly enough I see 't is a barren place, despite your tone of content and gayety, which is plainly assumed. Ah! my son, you cannot deceive a mother's instinct. With no Court life, no opera, no theatre, no books, no pictures, no society, what can there be to sweeten or support existence? 'T is wrong in me, I know, to be thus breeding discontent in you with your surroundings, since for the present at least your exile seems enforced; but I tremble lest you should grow so wonted to your new life

that you will lose all taste for civilization, and choose rather to settle down yonder in a semi-barbarous state. I am, however, somewhat comforted by your assurance that I need have no fear of your marrying, since there is nobody of sufficient rank in the province to make you a wife.' "

The reader hesitated, and seemed suddenly to find it difficult to proceed.

"Very good indeed!" cried the teacher, intent upon the lesson. "Go on!"

"'No, my son,'" continued the reader with a peculiar change of tone, "'never make that mistake! A—marriage—with—an—inferior—would—prove your—utter—ruin!'"

The reader's voice faltered, and she blundered and stumbled surprisingly over the most simple words.

"Come, come! you grow worse instead of better!" cried the teacher, chidingly. "I wonder Master Pelham has such patience with you! At it again, now, and see you do better!"

"'It would not only put an end to your prospects at Court, where your preferment may depend upon a happy match, but—but—'"

"'But—but—' What's the matter now? Has the dear old lady been blotting the page? Let me see!"

Agnes mechanically handed over the letter.

"Not at all; 't is in her best style, and almost as plain as print. Here, there 's no excuse for you; take it and finish!"

Picking up, with a passive movement of obedience, the sheet tossed back to her, Agnes went on: —

"'But—cost—you—a—noble—inheritance. You know your uncle's high hopes for you and his invincible prejudices. Last, my dear son, by such an act you would break your mother's heart!'"

Pausing here and muttering something incoherent by way of excuse, the reader rose, handed back the letter, and walked rapidly away.

"Eh! tired so soon! Oh, very well; this will do for a beginning. We 'll try again some other day. All you need is practice. Ugh-h-h!" yawning, and drawing out his watch. "'T is time we were moving on. Take a look at my wig, please, and see if 't is dry enough yet!"

Receiving no answer, and suddenly recalling something peculiar in his pupil's face as she handed back the letter, the Collector sprang to his feet just in time to see her disappearing around a distant curve in the homeward road.

"Agnes! Why, Agnes! Stay!— What 's the matter? Ag-nes, I say! Stop! stop!"

Giving back neither look nor word, however, Agnes held her course, leaving her astonished companion staring blankly after her in the midst of the highway.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN OLD FRIEND AND A DISH OF FIGS.

IN running away from Frankland and his reading-lesson Agnes had simply yielded to blind impulse, — a mere physical instinct to escape from pain, without taking thought of her motive. This obtrusive question came up presently when she paused to take breath. Dazed to find herself without an excuse that could be put into words, she paused, and for a moment made a movement to turn back; but directly breaking loose from the weak hold of reason with a rebellious cry of impatience, she whirled about and sped on again at redoubled speed.

It was just before nightfall when she entered the town. The streets were full of people going home from their work. Many a curious glance was cast at the agitated girl, as with burning cheeks and downcast eyes she passed along. Arrived at last in the neighborhood of home, as she was threading her way through North Street a rough-looking man suddenly turned the corner of an alley from the direction of the Town Dock and walked on before her. There was nothing notable in his appearance save his unusual size and lumbering gait.

At first Agnes did not heed him; but as she came nearer, some little characteristic trick of gait or car-

riage caught her eye, when, springing forward, she seized him by the arm, and cried in ringing tones:—

"Job — Job Redden, is it you?"

He stopped and stood patiently as with eager eyes she scanned his face. He made no effort to avoid her glance, nor pretence of not knowing her; but, save for the look of recognition which was as nearly negative as it could be, his face was a blank. Neither surprise, nor joy, nor jealousy, nor anger, nor a gleam of any perceptible emotion lighted up the heavy immobility of his features. His rough hand lay unresponsive in her tight grasp, and he stood unconscious as a statue of the embrace in which she held him.

"Job, Job, I ha' been long lookin' for ye! I saw ye t' other day from the window, an' well-nigh broke my neck runnin' down to catch ye. What went wi' ye so sudden? I — I feared ye 'd maybe gone home wi'out seein' me."

She paused for an answering look or word of sympathy.

"Job," she continued, gazing anxiously into his face, "does anything ail ye, man?"

He shook his head listlessly.

"But do ye not know me? It 's Ag — little Ag —"

"Ay!"

"An' is this the way to greet old friends? Ha' ye no word for me?"

"Oi wish ye well."

"Wish me well!" she repeated, starting back with a flash in her eye. "Ay, I hope so; 't is the least ye

can do. I know not why ye should wish me anythin' other. Ye might a' left that without sayin', Job Redden, to one has known ye since ye wor' a cut-tail."

But the taunt was thrown away upon the silent and impassive man before her.

"Oh, do not look that way at me! 'T is better to chide 'n' blame, as ye used, than stand ther' like a dumb image. Are ye sick? Tell me, an' I 'll ha' ye cared for!"

He shook his head as before.

"'N' what then 's the matter, that the life 'n' soul is gone out o' ye, or are ye in liquor mebbe? Job, ha' ye been drinkin'?"

"No, no; oi 'm well eno'," he said, trying to free himself from her grasp. "Oi 'll be goin' my way 'f ye ha' no errond for me."

"Errond for ye!" echoed Agnes; "but I have. Go tell my mother ye would not come to seek me out, but left me to find ye by chance upon the highway, an' ye well-nigh broke my heart wi' yer hard looks. Go tell her that when ye get back."

"Oi 'll go back yonder-r no more."

"'No more'?—'n' where then 'll ye go?"

"To fur-rin pā-ār-rts!"

"Go for a sailor—'n' ye a fisherman born!"

Job nodded.

"'N' wher' about in foreign parts 'll ye go?"

"Yonder wher' they fetch th' woine."

"France?"

"Por-rtygal they ca' 't."

Agnes shook her head; she had not reached that chapter in geography.

"An' when 'll ye be comin' back?"

"Whenever-r God wills 'n' th' ship sails, oi 'm thinkin'," he answered, half closing his eyes with an air of indifference.

"Come, shipmate," cried a gruff voice behind them, "cast loose fro' yer sweetheart! 'T is time to be gettin' aboard."

"Ay, ay; oi 'm comin'," answered Job, disengaging himself from Agnes's hold, and turning to follow the speaker.

She made a vague movement to stop him, and, turning pale, caught hold of a neighboring fence for support. There, clinging, she watched the lumbering figures out of sight. There, too, mayhap for hours she might have stood, gazing blankly down the vacant street, had not two of the town fence-viewers, worthy Messrs. Hopestill Foster and Onesiphorus Tileston, as their last official act for the day, come to inspect the very fence upon which she was leaning. Friends of Mistress Ruck, they recognized and accosted her. Annoyed by their obtrusive questions, she started up and hurried home.

The sudden and mysterious change which had taken place in the lodger's mood during the few hours of her absence was at once remarked by Mercy, who let her in.

After a wakeful night passed in vain speculation as to the cause of it, she went up betimes next morning to pay the lodger a visit.

Agnes sat at the harpsichord; it was her hour for

practising. The spinster paused at the door and framed an excuse for entering, as was her custom when uncertain of her reception.

"I was wondering whether maybe you would like some of these," she began, extending, as she spoke, a dish of figs. "*He* brings 'em — always brings her somethin', you know, — but *she*," pointing downwards, "cannot bear 'em 'count of the dirt, 'n' I always eat these 'n' the barley-candy. Help yourself!"

Agnes shook her head.

"Oh, can't eat while you're playin'? They're considered very wholesome. Do you mind if I sit here where I can see your fingers?"

Agnes silently assented, and went on with her music. She was too well accustomed to her visitor to be disturbed.

"What a marvellous thing it is!" continued the spinster, gently dusting the instrument with her handkerchief as she talked. "It must have cost a great store of money. But I suppose he is so rich that — Did you ever go into his house?"

The musician shook her head.

"'T is said to be very grand within; all the furniture brought over from England, an' such curious things picked up in foreign parts as were never seen here."

The player gave no sign of having heard, and yet went on playing over and over the same page of music in a way that showed her mind was not busied with the score.

"One would soon get his peck, eatin' figs," con-

tinued Mercy, picking over the fruit upon the dish. "And the seeds are past numberin'. 'T is a pity, — is it not? — a great pity he should be so wild."

The music lapsed from *piano* to *pianissimo*.

"'T is said he has parties — two or three in the week, sometimes — when the lights are kept flarin' all night long, and there is sound of much revelry and riotous behavior within."

"'T is no concern of anybody's what he has!" cried the musician, sharply, coming to a dead stop.

"Of course not; so it is n't; so I tell mother. He has company because he 's lonesome, as who would n't be, livin' all sole alone in that big house?"

The music began again *fortissimo*.

"I used to wonder what he did it for," continued the spinster. "'T is so odd a thing for a man to set up housekeeping alone; but," she concluded, with a masterful touch of finesse, "when they said he was goin' to be married —"

The musician made a frightful discord.

"Who told you that?" she asked sharply.

"Folks say so."

"'T is a lie!"

"Oh!"

The musician rose and paced the floor for several minutes, and then flung herself down in a window-seat across the room.

"He will never get married in America, because," she continued, with the air of one reciting a formula, "there is nobody of sufficient rank in the province to make him a wife."

"'Rank!'" echoed Mercy, watching intently the

lodger's changing manner; "there be many here of high degree, and — "

"'And'?" repeated Agnes, impatiently.

"He may not stand upon that point himself."

"Ay, but he does."

"How know you that?"

Agnes stared at this downright question and the speaker's look of growing intensity.

"They are his own words," she said, after a moment's consideration, as if having made up her mind for some purpose to continue the conversation.

"Eh!" exclaimed the spinster almost breathlessly, as she moved into a nearer chair. "He told you that?"

"No."

"Ah!"

"But," continued Agnes, noting anxiously the effect of every word upon her companion, "he gave it to me to read in his mother's letter."

"You said 'his own words.'"

"She was only repeating them."

"He may have said it to please her."

"You think so?"

The lodger caught at the suggestion with a momentary look of relief, then shaking her head doubtfully, added, —

"No, — no; he spoke his mind!"

"But," asked Mercy, after a little pause, during which she nervously cracked the joints of her fingers as she wrestled with the problem, "what did she write about it for? She must have persuaded herself there was ground of alarm."

Agnes turned with a blank look as if slowly recalling her mind from some other train of thought. "Yes!" she cried at last with suddenness. "I thought not of that — yes; for she said that to marry one of lower rank would ruin him."

"Ruin!"

"Destroy his prospects, and —"

"'And,'" repeated Mercy, intruding her bony figure like a human interrogation-point into the window-seat beside Agnes.

"And break his mother's heart," concluded Agnes, watching closely the effect of her words.

"Oh!"

The two sat looking at each other for a whole minute in silence.

"Men mind not always their mothers' bidding in such matters," suggested Mercy at length. — "You 'd better try a fig; they come from Sum-yr-na, or some such outlandish place where they seem not to trouble themselves about dirt. — Nor do I think a young man ever does that he thinks he will, or knows, indeed, what he 's going to do till 't is done. My experience has not been great," she continued, suppressing a sigh and choosing another fig, "but I suspect 't is a matter of touch and go, when all is said, and one case is much like another."

The tense lines of the lodger's face slightly relaxed, and a little look of relief stole over it as she listened.

"Look at *her!*" continued the spinster, wiping her sticky fingers upon her apron and nodding downwards. "She knows not at this minute what she will do in the end. She would never waste a look

upon him when it began, and gave him a cold shoulder for a long time; but he 's been courtin' these two years now, and 't is my opinion if he yields all points on the settlement 't will be a match. You 'd best try a fig!"

The lodger accepted the offer, and long after the spinster was called away by a sharp summons from below, sat curled up in the sun-lighted window-seat, munching figs until the dish was finished.

CHAPTER XV.

VANITY FAIR.

DIRECTLY after the walk to Cambridge, official business called the Collector from Boston for several weeks. Hard upon his return there came sailing into the harbor one fine morning the frigate "Rose," of the Royal Navy, in command of his own younger brother, Captain Thomas Frankland.

Welcome enough was this visit to the exiled Englishman, and only too gladly he undertook — what indeed belonged to him on the score both of office and kinship, — the duty of doing the honors of the little town to the gallant captain and his convivial party of young officers.

The task of finding diversion for these merry gentlemen, just escaped from the confinement of the vessel after a long voyage, proved, however, to be no sinecure; and what with these hospitable efforts and the discharge of his daily duties at the Custom House, it will readily be seen there was scant time left to bestow upon his ward.

But Agnes happily knew something of the state of affairs and surmised much more. She had heard the cannon on Fort Hill thunder forth a salute to the stranger vessel the morning it came sailing up the

channel; indeed, from her own chamber-window she could see the royal ensign floating above the frigate as it lay at anchor in the harbor. She had read, too, in the "Evening Post" the name of the gallant commander, and of his relationship with the Collector.

As making clear the cause of Frankland's absence and seeming neglect, all this was of comfort; but for the rest, there was something ominous to Agnes in this coming of the strange vessel. She was beset by a haunting fear — a feeling too vague to be put into words by one not yet skilled in resolving mental whys and wherefores — that it boded disaster to her happiness. Oddly enough, it would persistently associate itself with that proud mother's letter, the words of which yet rung in her ears. There needs must be something in the coincidence. This brother with his official prestige, his glittering uniform, and all the pomp and circumstance of authority, — why else had he come over the seas on the heels of that letter, but to bring back this wandering sheep to the fold, to shut him in behind the barriers of rank and caste, to bind him by new oaths to the career of ambition.

Once admitted to parley, this fancy carried the mind by assault and drove reason and judgment out of doors. Facts were ignored, experience was set at nought. The work of the past — the long months of familiar intercourse which had reduced him from heroic to human proportions — was undone, and Frankland arose once more before her imagination as she had first seen him at the little inn, a being of another and higher order.

Want of the wholesome corrective of daily companionship had, of course, much to do with this. As a vacant room is invaded by cobwebs, so Agnes's mind, untenanted by work-a-day Fact, was given over to idle Fancy. In the absence — prolonged now to several weeks — of the real Frankland she had let in an intruding ideal. The result as shown in her action was curious.

One day on the road home from school she went out of her way to pass his office. Instead of her usual course through North, she went roundabout through Hanover Street. Approaching the well-known spot, she became strangely agitated: her color rose, her pulse quickened, her heart beat furiously as with resolutely averted eyes she hurried past, only pausing when she reached the corner to cast a wistful look backward upon the building from which, at that moment, by the irony of chance, the unconscious Collector was miles distant on a pleasure excursion with his merry companions.

On another occasion, which more clearly showed her contradictory frame of mind, noting some commotion among the passers-by upon the street, she turned about and beheld the Collector quite near at hand, in the act of parting with some of his guests. Their gay uniforms attracted the attention of the populace, and Agnes stood staring with the rest, until suddenly, before she had warning of his purpose, Frankland whirled around and came briskly towards her along the street. Pausing not to note whether he saw her, she turned down the first alley and precipitately fled.

Meantime the presence of so many distinguished visitors in the little town naturally caused a stir in society, and was made the occasion of a brilliant round of entertainments; in the course of which, as a proof that she was not forgotten, Agnes one morning received a hurried note from Frankland, enclosing an invitation to a party at Madame Vassall's in honor of the officers of the frigate.

As she had not the honor of Madame Vassall's acquaintance, and as she had never been to a party in her life, she could scarcely have been more terrified if summoned to execution.

Before she had time to recover from her dismay, moreover, Mrs. Shirley came rolling up to the door in her coach to say that the invitation had been sent at her own instance, and that she had promised Mr. Frankland to take charge of his ward and see that she was provided with a suitable toilet for the occasion.

"Oh, but, dear madam, I — I 'm right glad to see ye, as ye know, 'n' most beholden I am for your kind offices; but — but — "

"But what, my dear?"

"I — I 'm thinkin' I 'll not go to the party."

"Poh, poh, poh! 'Go'! — you have no choice in the matter."

"I ha' never yet been to a thing like that, and — "

"All the more need you should begin; and you could not have a better opportunity."

"But — but I — "

"Tut, tut! Mr. Frankland desires it, and the thing is settled. Never fear, my dear," continued the matron, repressing a smile at the consternation in

Agnes's face; "you shall go in under my wing, and I will take care of you."

"But if I know nobody, they 'll wonder to see me, an' — "

"There will be all your young friends of the dancing-school, — the Phipses, the Quincys, the Wendells, the Cradocks, the Lydes, and the rest. You will get on famously; so, now, have done with qualms and scruples, and let us give our minds to your gown!"

Silenced, but not reassured, Agnes sat passively while the experienced matron studied her points and planned her toilet.

"I think," said the latter presently, "it had best be of white satin over pink brocade, with a necklace of pearls — "

"'Pearls!'" echoed Agnes, aghast.

"Yes; I will lend you the jewels myself, with pendants to match."

"Oh, 't would be far too grand for me, ma'am!"

"Not a whit; you are studying to become a lady — so far as you may," concluded the matron with an elastic reservation.

"Ay," said Agnes, dubiously.

"Remember this, then, — nothing on earth can ever be too grand for a lady."

Agnes stood pondering this overwhelming statement in awe-struck silence, until her visitor exclaimed impatiently: —

"But come! Come, my dear, I have little time to spare; get on your hat and go with me to the mantua-maker!"

On parting, Mrs. Shirley stipulated that as her own coach was to be filled on the night of the party with some gentlemen the Governor was entertaining, Agnes should be escorted by one of the widow's maids, drive to the Vassalls' in the Collector's coach, and await her coming in the dressing-room.

It may fairly be doubted whether Mrs. Shirley would have suggested so informal an arrangement to a daughter of one of her own friends; and the fact that she proposed it as a matter of course to Agnes is significant of certain distinctions she still made in her case.

As for the latter, quite oblivious as yet of such subtle shades of courtesy, she thanked Mrs. Shirley cordially for her kindness, and went home with a heart full of gratitude for the distinguished consideration with which she had been treated.

If its effect upon Mercy count for anything, Agnes's gown must have been a success. Running upstairs, on the night of the party, to get a peep at the lodger, the dazzled spinster stood for a moment dumfounded before a vision of beauty unmatched in her experience.

"Soul 'n' body! Is 't you? I — I would never 'a' thought *you* could — Why, 't is — 't is as fine as a picture! Oh, if mother could be persuaded now but to take one look at you!"

But the widow was quite superior to any such weakness; for although she heard the Collector's coach presently roll up to the door with great rattle of harness and cracking of whip, although she heard the lodger trip rustling downstairs in her silken

finery, — of which Mercy had already been in with a breathless account, — the widow, calmly knitting at the window, with an incredible control of every feminine impulse, never raised her head to look out.

Madam Vassall lived in one of the finest houses in town. Standing on the spot now occupied by a well-known dry-goods shop on the southern side of Summer Street, it was of generous proportions, and built in the simple but stately style of architecture in vogue in the middle of the last century.

As with a sinking heart Agnes approached this notable old-time mansion in the wake of a long line of coaches, chairs, and chaises, she had ample leisure to study its details, — the noble portico and balcony over the front door, the gambrel roof and luthern window, the courtyard paved in blue and white pebbles laid in quaint patterns, the garden fragrant with box and honeysuckle, the octagonal summer-house shaded by a huge English walnut-tree, and the long arcades adjoining the stable decorated with elaborate panel-work and painted in two shades of yellow to match the house.

At last her carriage drew up before the entrance, and Agnes, folding more closely about her a mantle of fleecy Indian drapery, with faltering steps passed through the front door, flung open by an expectant negro slave, and up the massive staircase made of solid Spanish mahogany, — brought by the late Leonard Vassall from his estates in the West Indies, — to the upper hall, where an antique clock in an alcove near the head of the stairs struck six as she passed along.

In the dressing-room she found Mrs. Shirley already arrived and standing before a pier-glass while a turbaned mulatto maid adjusted her dress.

Barely repressing a cry of admiration when Agnes entered, the matron surveyed the trembling novice with a critical glance, and contented herself with saying: —

"Humph! you will do very well, child; there might be a thought more fulness in the skirt — Go, Diana, and shake it out! Now, turn about, my dear! Yes, yes, you will do very well indeed. Did you see his Excellency in the passage?"

"I noted nobody there," faltered Agnes.

"He must be waiting this long time, and impatient enough, I dare say. Hand me my fan, Diana! Come, child, let us go down!"

When they reached the lower floor Agnes was at first dazed and bewildered by the hum of voices, the glare of lights, and the splendor of the scene. Hindered by the crowd as they made their slow way towards the hostess, she had time, however, to recover her presence of mind and look about. Never before had she seen so beautiful a room. Lofty and spacious, it was finished in the same costly wood as the hall, and hung, moreover, with rare old tapestry whose dim colors formed a background for the brilliant and picturesque dresses of the company, — men as well as women, — which would have delighted the heart of a modern dilettante.

With a scared yet fascinated look, Agnes clung close to her protector, who from time to time laughingly whispered words of comfort in her ear, but

who, despite all remonstrance, persisted in presenting the crowd of gentlemen who pressed up to pay their respects, as a matter of course, to the lady of the Governor.

Agnes could find little to say to these smiling gallants beyond a murmured yes or no; but happily their talk needed no very definite answer, and her silence doubtless passed for reserve or hauteur. With Mrs. Shirley's watchful assistance she was thus getting along very fairly, and indeed just beginning to feel somewhat at ease, when presently in the midst of the throng she saw Frankland making towards them with a tall martial-looking figure on his arm. Panic-seized, she turned with a vague impulse of flight, but seeing no way of escape, and on the point of swooning with agitation, clutched Mrs. Shirley frantically by the sleeve.

"What is it, my dear?"

But before she could answer, Captain Frankland with a look of marked admiration stood bowing before her. Quite losing her head and forgetting all her training, Agnes fell back upon her old Marblehead dialect as she stammered forth in reply to his elaborate salutation: —

"Ay, oi ha' heer-rd th' guns foired fur-r yer-r honor-r, 'n' oi ha' seen yer-r ship yonder-r i' th' hor-rbar-r!"

The Captain stared, and Frankland and Mrs. Shirley exchanged glances. Happily the music striking up made further conversation unnecessary, and the Collector, seized with a timely inspiration, led his ward out to dance. Nothing could have been better

adapted to bring back to its old easy footing their interrupted intercourse than the chance snatches of talk permitted by the dance. Straightway the heroic Frankland dissolved into thin air, and Agnes beheld before her a medium-sized, florid person, who uttered commonplaces in her ear and was none too well skilled in his steps.

The effect of this metamorphosis was wholesome. Gradually all constraint and discomfiture disappeared from her manner, and forgetful of herself, forgetful of everything but her present happiness, into which in some way the cadence of the music and the rhythmic movement of the dance seemed interwoven as natural components, she glided through the familiar figures of the minuet in which Master Pelham had so thoroughly drilled her, with the grace of pure abandonment.

Careless now of the company, and quite unconscious of the growing admiration she excited, Agnes went forth again and again to the dance, until in no long time the beauty and grace of the Collector's ward became a subject of common comment in the room.

Among her partners, moreover, it is to be noted, none paid her more marked and flattering attentions than the gallant commander of the "Rose," who would seem to have quite recovered from the shock of his first presentation.

Naturally gratified by attentions from so distinguished a man, and ashamed of the suspicions she had harbored against him, Agnes responded to his kindness with the most generous confidence, and

forgetful of all distinctions in rank, talked to him with the unconstraint of old acquaintance. It was only on reaching home and living it all over in the solitude of her own chamber that she found, to her surprise, hovering in her mental atmosphere a little lone, bat-like misgiving, which set up a desperate fluttering at every awakened remembrance of the bold admiring gaze of the stranger.

Henceforth, either out of compliment to the Collector or on account of the favorable impression she had herself created, Agnes was included in all the social movements of the season. There was a turtle-frolic at Cambridge, whither the company repaired in chairs and chaises; a horseback ride to Medford, to wait upon Mistress Penelope Royall at her father's grand old mansion, — confiscated at the Revolution, but still standing to this very day, — where, from divers soft glances exchanged between the young hostess and handsome Henry Vassall, certain predictions were hazarded which time has long since fulfilled and history forgotten.

Again, there was an entertainment at Faneuil Hall, described in the "Evening Post" as a "Consort of Music for the benefit of the poor of the town . . . which will begin at half an hour after five in the evening. . . . Tickets, ten shillings ea."

Following this came a country excursion to Mr. Quincy's at Milton, where the whole party with much merriment took part in catching the eels they were to have cooked for supper from the brook at the bottom of the garden.

Lastly, as a wind-up to the round of festivities, just

before the sailing of the frigate there was a musical party at the Governor's, where, after much persuasion, Agnes placed herself at the harpsichord and sang several ballads to her own accompaniment. Even Mrs. Shirley and the Collector, who were aware of her vocal powers, were astonished at the performance; while as for Captain Frankland, who shared his brother's musical taste, it was noted that for the rest of the evening he did not quit the singer's side, and on breaking up was a long time in making his adieux.

The Collector, with a coach-load of his own particular friends, drove back to town to finish the night as usual in Garden Court Street. As this was their last opportunity ashore, the revelry was prolonged far into the morning.

Here, naturally enough, as the cup circulated, the music they had heard kept running in their ears.

"Miss Surriage has a fine voice," said one, as he recalled a favorite strain.

"Deuced fine!" chimed in several others.

"Miss Surriage is a fine bird!" cried the Captain, raising his glass; "and here 's to her health!"

"'Gad! but she is," said the first speaker, with a wag of his head and an unctuous emphasis. "She looked like a siren as she sang."

"And she is a siren, too," retorted the Captain, emphatically, as he set down his empty glass. "Harry, my boy, you 're a lucky dog; were she not your prize, I 'd carry her away disguised as a middy."

"Never mind him, — take her along! A civilian has no rights," shouted a bibulous voice from the

bottom of the table. "Besides, he deserves no such prize; he knows not the worth of it."

"Hear, hear! No more does he! The anchorite! Not he!" came in a confused chorus from all parts of the table.

"Gentlemen," said the Collector, falling in with the tone of the meeting, "the man who discovered this rare creature and rescued her from obscurity may fairly lay claim to some merit for taste and discernment."

"Ah, but think how you treat her, man!" rejoined his brother, growing warmer with the punch, — "shut up yonder with that old griffin you tell of. Why not have her here at your own fireside to cheer your loneliness and glad you with her charms?"

"Tut, tut! my friends," exclaimed the Collector, shaking his head deprecatingly. "London manners and morals are not for this place."

A loud shout of derision rose from the whole party at this feeble attempt at a protest.

"D——n me!" cried the Captain, pounding the table with his fist, "if I don't think you 're turning Puritan, Hal!"

Overborne by the bacchanalian applause which greeted this thrust, the discomfited Collector blushed to find how fast he was losing metropolitan tone and polish in the wilds of America.

CHAPTER XVI.

A VISITOR.

HISTORY credits Frankland with a knowledge of natural science among his other accomplishments; and there is, indeed, good reason for believing that he had, besides a respectable acquaintance with botany, a love of horticulture and much taste and skill as a landscape gardener.

In Agnes he found, to his delight, a kindred spirit. Although brought up on the sterile coast of Marblehead, she speedily developed, under his guidance, a great fondness for plant life and growth. This ripened, with indulgence, into a genuine passion, implying capabilities of sacrifice and suffering, — such as burning her fair face in the sun, thrusting her white hands into the dirt, or bending her supple back until it ached, in the daily struggle with weeds.

They had at first much ado to get a bit of ground to till; but by the diplomatic gift of divers rare shrubs, the widow was at last won over to bestow upon the lodger an odd corner of the kitchen-garden.

Directly a transformation took place in that neglected corner which amazed the widow and Mercy. Instead of a tangle of brambles and moribund herbs, it was speedily filled with curious and beautiful

plants, all in thrifty state and healthful growth. Frankland, indeed, laid the world under contribution for this little patch of soil. Every time he came it was with some choice plant or seed fetched from abroad.

The enthusiasm of his pupil meanwhile was inspiring. Nothing languished under her care. She came gradually to regard her plants as a family of living, sentient creatures, delicately responsive to nurture, and not incapable of gratitude. She claimed to detect in them marks of individuality and traits of character. With true lover instinct she puzzled out their virtues and foibles, and quite consistently insisted upon a lurking vegetable intelligence which prompted them to recognize her coming step in the morning and nod her a drowsy farewell from their dew-laden petals at night.

Hers was the sort of enthusiasm which grows by what it feeds on. Hence the daily changes which took place in her little plant-family were of absorbing interest. Every evening she came running to meet Frankland at the gate, with a breathless account of them.

"Oh, what think you now! — come and look! The Italian seeds are up: those with the outlandish name, planted next the hawthorn, — a score of them, and the drollest things, like little mouths all open. Yes, and one of the Dutch bulbs has sprouted, which we thought dead, you remember; and — oh, come hither quick and look, some dreadful creature is eating up all my rose-leaves!"

The evening was Agnes's gardening-time; for what

with her mornings given up to the harpsichord, and the middle day to Master Pelham, what other chance had she? This was the question with which she triumphantly answered the widow's objection that the best time for such work was the morning.

"Moreover, you might then miss the worshipful Collector's aid," added Mercy, demurely; "for 't is said he lieth abed of a morning."

Saturdays, however, there was no task, and Agnes spent a long, happy day among her flowers. There, as it chanced, she was busily at work as usual, one Saturday morning, when, hearing a click of the gate-latch, she turned about and saw a common-looking woman enter and come along the path. Pausing only to note that she was a stranger, Agnes went on with her work.

"Good-day to ye, miss!" said the woman, approaching her.

Agnes sprang to her feet and confronted the stranger with startled eyes.

"Con ye tell me 'f one Ag Surriage lodge her' yet, 'n' wher' oi con get speech wi' her?" pursued the woman, courtesying respectfully.

Another minute and the astonished stranger recoiled with a cry of terror as Agnes, throwing rake and pruning-knife to the ground, sprang forward, and with a wild, inarticulate cry, seized her about the neck.

"Eh, eh! honds off! Let go o' me! Oi ha' done no hor-rm!"

"Mother — mother!"

"Saunts i' heaven!"

"Don't ye know yer own Ag?"

"My Ag!" echoed the woman, releasing herself, and drawing back to assure herself of the astounding fact; "yer never-r choild o' moine!"

"See for yourself! See, now!" cried Agnes, throwing off her hat and looking close into her mother's eyes. "Now am I your own child — now am I Ag, or no?"

"Lord help me! ha' oi lost my wits? Ugh — ugh! ye're takin' my breath. Stond off a bit tell oi ha' another-r look at ye! Ay, ay, th' voice, th' oies. Ay," she continued, gazing in open-mouthed admiration, "cock-sur-re 't is our-r Ag! Soul 'n' body! such a gr-rond beauty! Who 'd ever-r thought choild o' moine 'ud look loike this!"

"Tush, tush! What a fond old fool ye 're growing!" cried Agnes, patting affectionately her mother's weather-beaten cheek.

"Such a whoite face, 'n' such whoite honds, — gi' me hoult o' 'em! A' glitter-rin' wi' r-rings, too! To think o't — yer bein' our-r Ag! Dear-r, dear-r, yer for-rther 'd never-r know ye, lass — never-r, he wud n't."

"Father, you say! Where is he? Did he come with you?"

"Not he; thet he did n't; never-r fear-r him goin' onywher' fro' home, save to th' Bonks."

"But he is well?"

"Ay, borrin' a bit o' rheumatics."

"And Hugh, and Moll?"

"Th' young uns! — gr-rown up out o' a' knowin'; but — eh, ther's none o' them loike ye, Ag. Wher'

got ye a shape loike thet? 'T is loike th' figger-r o' a queen. Gi' me yer honds agin — to think o' a choild o' moine wi' honds loike thet — ther's no mor-rk o' toil ther'!" concluded the dame in a tone of irrepressible pride.

"There should be, then, for I toil here every day."

"Oh, ay; a leddy's spor-rt!" exclaimed the dame, with a careless glance about at the flowers.

The excitement of meeting and recognition over, Agnes took her mother into the house for rest and refreshment.

"Eh, ye say! — a' this gr-rond chamber-r to yer-sel'!" exclaimed the dame, on entering Agnes's room. "'T is as much as we ha' at home for young uns 'n' a'."

Placing herself beside her mother in the window-seat, Agnes waved her hand mechanically toward the view, improving meanwhile her first opportunity to study the dame's unconscious face with attention.

"Ay," exclaimed the dame, understanding the motion, "berryin' gr-run hill is nowher' 'n' nothin' besoide it."

A troubled look began, meanwhile, gradually to replace the expression of interest with which Agnes regarded her mother. Anxiously her eyes wandered from the vulgar features to the ungainly figure, over the coarse garb, and down upon the rough, toil-worn hand which she held in her own.

The dame's attention meanwhile was once more drawn to the interior.

"Never-r tell me, Ag," she exclaimed in the

hushed tone of awe, — "never-r tell me ye sleep i' yon gr-rond bed!"

The tone and expression recalled so vividly her own first impression of the widow's heirloom, that Agnes burst into a sudden laugh.

"Ay, but 't was long before I could dream of anything but ghosts, for they say many of 'em have died on it."

"Oi worrnt ye," said the dame, deeply interested; "but an ye wor n't a fisher-r lass ye 'd never-r climb up to it wi'out a ledder-r. But wher' got ye yon thing? 'T is loike the music-box at the Governor's yonder-r."

But the former look had crept back into Agnes's face, and she was not heeding.

"Eh, ye say?"

"'T is mine," exclaimed Agnes, recalled to herself and pressing her mother's hand with a sudden impulse as if of apology for her thought; "and where should I get it but Mr. Frankland gave it to me?"

"'Gev it,' quo' she! Who ever-r heer-rd o' th' loike!" exclaimed the dame, approaching the harpsichord with an air of curiosity and reverence. "An' ha' ye lor-rned to mak' it go, Ag?"

"That I have, well-nigh equal to Master Pelham himself, they say."

"Come hither-r, then; sit ye down an' let us hear!" cried the dame, eagerly.

"You think I have no toil, mother; you little know the hard toil goes to the learning of that."

"Oi worrnt it, oi worrnt it; but sit ye down\

sit ye down! Oi 'll believe nothin' but my own senses i' th' motter-r."

Agnes seated herself at the instrument and sang some familiar airs, while Goody Surriage stood balancing now on one foot and now on the other, quite unable to restrain her delight.

"Eh, eh, thet oi should live to see 't! An yer forther-r cud but hear-r ye! 'T is loike aungels singin' in glor-ry! A choild o' moine too! Eh, eh, oi 'll be blubber-rin' i' another minit! Oi 'd gi' me last shillin' thet th' young uns moight see ye now! Oh, Ag, Ag! oi hope 't is not sinfu', lass; but me old her-rt is fu' o' proide thet oi ha' borne ye!"

Agnes rose suddenly and clasped her mother tightly in her arms. Was it the revolt of Nature against some unfilial impulse? Why else was the kiss she imprinted on the unsuspecting woman's lips so like a caress of atonement? Even the obtuse fishwife detected something wrong in the long-drawn sigh with which her daughter at length walked away to the window. The good woman would never have interpreted it as a note of struggle and penitence. Happily for her such a thought was inconceivable. Physical ills alone had been given her to battle with in life. Sordid cares had choked out any tender sproutings of sentiment, and the healthful sea-breezes blown away all morbid anxiety.

"Is somethin' th' motter-r wi' ye?" she contented herself with asking.

"What should be the matter with me?"

"Nothin'; nothin' i' th' woide war-rld thet oi can see," returned the dame, easily satisfied.

Thus, quite taken up with her own happiness and in gratifying her curiosity at the many novel things in her daughter's surroundings, she failed to remark the anxious, preoccupied look with which Agnes sat conning her face while she rehearsed with garrulous detail the neighborhood news from Little Harbor. One speech of her daughter's the dame did not understand.

After dinner, with the intent of taking her mother out to see the town, Agnes put on a suitable dress for the occasion, when the dame was thrown straightway into new fits of enthusiasm.

"Eh, is it you? Stond yonder; tur-rn about, now. So, oi connot trust my own soight. Oi thet ha' suckled ye at my own br-reast 'ud never-r know ye for-r Ag Surriage. Eh, but oi durst not go for-rth wi' ye. A' th' folks 'll be cryin' out, 'Who 's th' old fishwoife walkin' wi' yon gr-rond leddy?'"

The dame's raptures in this instance, instead of moving her laughter as at first, seemed to grate upon Agnes's nerves, for she cried: —

"Have done, will you, with such foolishness!"

"Eh, but ther' was a touch o' th' old Ag for ye!" exclaimed her mother, laughing.

Goody Surriage, having seized the opportunity of coming to Boston with one of her neighbors who had run up in his ketch for a load of salt, was obliged to return the same afternoon when the errand was accomplished.

Agnes went to the wharf to see her off. The poor dame was so delighted and busied with her various gifts of cast-off clothing, fruit, confectionery, pipes

and tobacco for the old man, and, best of all, a broad gold piece which she held tightly clutched in her hand, that she did not think of the parting until just as the ketch was about to swing out from the dock.

Warned by the fisherman that the last moment had come, Agnes folded her mother suddenly in her arms, kissed her fervently again and again, and stepped quickly over the gunwale back to the wharf.

Realizing that the parting was over, the dame broke into a loud wail: —

"Oh, Ag, Ag! — eh, but 't is breakin' my her-rt to pā-ārt wi' ye! Oh, my choild, when be ye comin' back? When be ye comin' home to live wi' us?"

Agnes stared at her mother a little wildly; the question was unexpected and startling.

"It cannot surely be long now," pursued the dame. "Yē ha' lor-rned to play the music-box, ye sing loike an aungel, 'n' yer a gret scholard, one may know by yer speech. Ye 'll be comin' soon, eh, — ye 'll be comin' soon, oi say?" repeated the anxious mother in a louder key as the boat drifted farther away and the busy fisherman hoisted his sail.

"I — Why I — I don't — "

Agnes was still stammering and laboring over her answer when the little ketch swept out of ear-shot. She filled the blank by waving her handkerchief. She waved it vigorously, waved it continuously, waved it until her arm must have ached to the shoulder, waved it indeed until the little ketch had faded to a mere speck in the offing and the weeping

dame must have had the eye of an Argonaut to distinguish it, and then turned back into the town with a fixed, blank look, from which it was clear enough that her whole action had been perfunctory.

In the same rapt mood she went home. There in the garden she found her rake and pruning-knife still lying upon the ground where she had thrown them in the morning, and mechanically set to work upon her flowers.

Directly through the open kitchen-window close at hand came the voice of the widow putting her slaves through their regular weekly catechism. "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy!"

Agnes started and dropped her rake; the sun had already set and the Lord's Day begun.

Picking up her tools presently to go in, she stood for a space gazing abstractedly at the western glow, still pondering her mother's question.

A step upon the gravel drew her attention; she turned and saw Frankland coming down the path.

Surprise for a moment unnerved her. Springing forward she seized his hand and cried impulsively:

"You!"

The next moment the rich blood in a rosy wave swept over her face and presently retreating left it paler than before.

Frankland gazed at her in surprise. Naturally, he could not account for this sudden exhibition of feeling. For some reason she said nothing about her mother's visit; neither did she talk about her flowers. She was unusually silent. But for her welcoming action at the outset he might have thought his

visit mistimed. Thus they walked up and down the paths in silence as the light faded from the sky.

"Wait!" she said, when at last he made a move to go; "you shall take some roses home."

Plucking some generous sprays of blossoms, she assorted them as she went towards him, thrusting two or three discarded buds in her hair and bodice.

"Stay!" he cried, gazing at her in admiration, "you shall have your portrait painted in that very guise. You never looked so beautiful in your life, child! Egad!" he cried, turning her about toward the light. "I 'll go see old Smybert about it as sure as the morrow dawns. It shall be as you are now, mind, with the flowers in your hair and neck!"

"Here are your roses!" murmured Agnes, abashed by his ardor.

"This is the rose I would fain have!" he cried, suddenly folding her in his arms. "Agnes, Agnes, darling, I can do without you no longer!"

Overcome by the suddenness of the movement and the fervor of the avowal, Agnes lay for a moment passive in his arms. Then roused by a passing reflection she struggled for release.

"No, no; you forget — let me go!"

"You shall not!"

"I must — it — it cannot be!"

"And why?"

"I — I know not — but —"

She stopped. Back to her mind with warning vividness came the image of that little ketch fading away upon the horizon, and with it the past — her old life, her childhood's home — seemed to fade far,

far out of reach, out of interest, out of all possible connection with her forevermore; and in place of all, her heart was flooded with a strange new happiness as a dear voice whispered in her ear: —

"Do you not love me, Agnes?"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PORTRAIT.

JUST south of the Orange-Tree inn, which in the old days marked the corner of Hanover and Queen Streets, stood John Smybert's studio. It was indeed through the honest old Scotsman's estate that Brattle Street in aftertimes burst forth into Scollay Square.

Having crept into art, as it were, through the back door, Smybert showed his right to remain by honest hard work and sufficient merit. Though a bit of a doctrinaire he never let theories cloud his clear vision of the main chance; and although the pioneer of portrait-painting in the New World, and the forerunner of a long line of distinguished artists who have been born or found a home in Boston, it is to be doubted whether any of them ever had a fuller strong-box or kept a better state.

"Ready an' waiting, ye see," cried the shrewd-looking little artist, as Frankland and Agnes one morning appeared at the door of his studio. "Come ben, come ben! And this is the young leddy," he continued, casting a professional glance at his subject. "Gude-day to ye, miss! I hope I see ye well. Frankland 'n' I are auld acquaintance, as ye may

surmise. Sit down till ye get your breath! 'T is a braw licht for a sittin'; the domned sun 's a wee bit wi'drawn. Sae," he continued, noting Agnes's curious looks, "ye were ne'er in an airtist's warkshop afore; speer aboot; tak' yer time an' speer aboot gin ye see onything strikes yer fancy!"

"No, no," interposed Frankland. "I am in haste this morning, and must be off, and I want the pose settled before I go. Never fear! she will have time enough to get acquainted with every crook and cranny of your wretched garret here if you are no more expeditious than some others of your brethren of the palette."

"Weel, weel, ha' yer crack at us! I dinna mind ye. 'Mak' haste slow!' is a gude auld sayin', 'n' I wadna hurry a portrait at the bidding o' the King himsel'; but a' is in readiness, as I said afore. Egad, sir!" he continued, aside to Frankland, as Agnes threw off her wraps, "but she 's a braw lass; I had na sic a subject sin' I set foot upon thae shores. — Please ye come hither, miss; here 's wher' I ha' fixed for ye to sit, wi' the licht comin' frae the side! Sit back a wee bit in yer chair! Sae! Noo haud up yer head a wee; there! an' — Stay, let yer hand fa' o'er th' chair! Noo pu' back yer sleeve to show yer bonny arm, — ay, sae! Noo haud yer breath an' dinna stir till I tak' a squint at ye! Eh, sir," he muttered aside to Frankland, as he walked to the back part of the room to study the pose, "an I could but strip awa' that domned flummery o' lace an' show a mair liberal glimpse o' yon lovely bosom, 't wad be anither thing a'taegither."

"Were it not better she should be looking at the rose in her hand?" asked the Collector, studying the subject with a connoisseur air.

"Na, na, that wad it not. I wadna miss the licht o' that ee frae the canvas for warlds."

"Sit up a little straighter, Agnes!" cried out the Collector, seized with another inspiration.

"Do naething o' the soort, lass! Never mak' a poker o' yersel at ony man's biddin'! Gang yer ain gait 'n' attend to yer business, Maister Collector, gin ye ha' naething better to offer!"

Frankland laughed and walked back and forth squinting at the subject from different points of view while the busy little artist adjusted her draperies.

"There, noo, ye 're a' ready, 'n' ye 're fit to be either a Venus or a Madonna, I canna say whilk," cried the painter at last in a tone of great satisfaction.

"Humph! yes," said the Collector, critically; "that will do very well."

The artist placed his easel in position, arranged his canvas and began to make a rough crayon sketch, while the Collector peered curiously over his shoulder, looking up at the sitter to verify the truth of every stroke.

Presently there came a knock at the door. The artist muttered a malediction at the interruption and went on with his work. A second and third time the knock was repeated with increasing force and pertinacity before the reluctant Smybert bawled out in forbidding tones a summons to enter.

The door promptly opened, and an anxious-looking matron appeared on the threshold. The painter did

not look up, yet his whole person, from his shoe-buckles to his rusty wig, bristled with an air of irritated recognition.

"Good-day to ye, Misther Smybert!"

"Gude-day, Mistress Pelham!"

"Is my Johnny here?"

"Canna ye see for yersel', my gude woman?" answered the artist, impatiently.

"Faith, av he 's not, wher's this I 'm to sarch for him, the botherin' young rogue? Here 't is market-day, 'n' I wid sorra a soul to lave behoind to moind the shop. Ah, he's the plague o' my loife, so he is!"

At this moment a suppressed sneeze was heard behind a screen in the corner. Frankland and Agnes started. The artist looked discomfited, and after a minute's pause, seeing that further concealment was in vain, with an affectation of astonishment he strode across the room, and throwing down the screen disclosed a small boy of twelve or thirteen perched upon a stool busily engaged at a charcoal drawing.

"Jock, what are ye doin' hidin' there, ye young rascal?" cried the artist, peevishly. "Dinna ye hear yer mither speerin' for ye?"

"Come home out o' that, ye bad boy!" interjoined the mother. "It 's takin' all me toime, it is, racin' the sthreets afther ye. Ye 'll coome to no good, so ye won't, lavin' yer books an' yer task an' wastin' yer toime wid that nasty coal! Luk at the hands o' ye!"

Pushing the reluctant boy before her, the indignant matron withdrew without the ceremony of leave-taking.

"Who are your friends?" asked the Collector with an amused look as the door closed on the pair.

"Little Jock Copley an' his mither, the Widow Pelham.

"To be sure; she that keeps the tobacco-shop. I take shame to myself for not having recognized the good dame, for I buy all my snuff of her."

"An' gude snuff it is, too," returned Smybert, taking out his box, tapping the lid mechanically, and offering it to the Collector while he stepped back to take a look at his work, — "the best Maccaboy to be had in the province. Raise yer chin a wee bit, lass, an' dinna be afeard to breathe as hard as ye like."

"And so little Copley is learning to draw?" continued Frankland, walking over to inspect the child's work.

"That is he, that is he; an' hae the richt stuff in him, too, gin his mither 'ud haud off her hand."

"Egad! but he has! Did the brat do this?" cried Frankland, eyeing the sketch in amazement.

"Every line o't did he; ay, he 's bound to go far ahead o' his auld maister ane o' thae days."

"'T is a pity, then, I had not engaged him for the portrait, since he has the more talent."

"Gang yer gait! gang yer gait, Mr. Collector! ye 're naething but a distraction here!"

"Good! I am off, and only too glad to leave you; but when will this operation be over?"

"Twal o'clock or ther'aboot. I 'll not mak' the first sitting o'er lang."

"No; three hours is long enough in all conscience. I will try to look in then and see how you get along."

"Dinna pit yersel' oot."

Frankland went away laughing at this parting shot, and the little painter settled down to his work.

"Eh, but he 's a fine lad, that," he said presently, pausing to pick a new brush. "'T is a sight for sair een,—that bonny face o' his; an' he 's naebody's fule, either, is the Collector; he hae seen gude wark at hame, an' kens a portrait frae a sign-board."

"Yes," assented the sitter, with a gratified look, "he knows a great deal."

"Ay, ay! too muckle for thae soort here; ther's a pair o' us. We 're like pearls cast to swine amang thae heathen who hae nae mair notion o' airt than the beasts o' the field. But he 'll na be for bidin' here mony months langer, I 'm thinkin'."

"Why do you think that?" faltered the sitter.

"There needs na prophet to foretell what onybody can see for himsel'. He 'll hae a chaunce yonder when his ain pairty coomes in, whilk it 's bound soon to do. Tut, tut! haud up yer head, lass! I 'm warkin' on yer ee. Na, he 's ne'er the lad to bide here, wastin' his life i' the wilderness, when he can hae what he wants for the askin' at hame. Gude guide us! Wher' be a' yer blithe looks gane? Gin ye 're weary o' sittin'—"

"No, no!" exclaimed the sitter, straightening up in her chair with a forced expression of cheerfulness. "I am not weary."

"Gude! sae turn yer ee a hair's-breadth mair this way. Richt; noo haud that— Na, as I was aboot to say, the Collector comes o' auncient stock, frae th' auld Protector himsel'; they 're a prood 'n' stiff-necked

race, 't is said, wi' baith riches 'n' power. He 's the elder son, too, is the Collector, — heir to the title on the death o' his uncle, an' a fortune, too, gin he does naethin' to mak' th' auld mon disaffected — Ther' ye go again, lass, wi' yer head an' yer ee turned awa'! — but gin he miss the money he maun e'en find a fortune wi' his wife — Eh, but I mout better gi' o'er an' haq done wi' it; ye look mair dolefu' than a tombstone."

The sitter made renewed efforts, but without avail, to bring back her looks and spirits to the high key with which they had started. To the increasing astonishment of the artist, her face lapsed into deeper and deeper gloom.

Thinking perhaps it might be due to the irksomeness of sitting still, worthy Smybert allowed his sitter frequent rests, entertained her with a variety of talk, including some quaint stories, and in fine exhausted his resources, but all to no purpose.

The moment she was released, the sitter put on her bonnet and cloak with all possible speed, and turning to the amazed painter said curtly: —

"You need give yourself no more trouble about that," pointing to the canvas. "I shall never come to have it finished."

"Eh, what 's the steer noo?"

The sitter without answer tied the strings of her gypsy bonnet tightly under her chin and turned to go.

"Hae I offended ye?" cried the artist in consternation.

"No."

"What 's ta'en ye, then?"

"I have changed my mind."

"Chaunged yer min'! Humph! sae ye hae chaunged yer min'? — Weel now, lassie, that winna do; I hae na chaunged my min'; I hae contraicted to paint ye, an' we maun e'en gae on."

"Go on then by yourself as long as you like; you 'll not see me again!"

And with a crisp good-day she swept from the room, leaving the nonplussed artist to puzzle over the cause of her strange behavior.

Coming out of the house, Agnes found Frankland just alighting from his chaise at the door. She would have passed, but that with smiling imperativeness he took her hand and lifted her into the vehicle before she well knew what had happened.

"And how comes on the portrait?" he asked gayly.

"'T is well enough."

"When are you to go again?"

"I 'll go no more."

"How now?" he cried, stooping to peep under her bonnet. "Have you and worthy old Smybert had a falling out?"

"No."

"What has happened?"

"Nothing at all."

"What did he say, then? That busy old tongue of his is always wagging."

"It is nothing to you."

"Heyday! And why nothing to me?"

"You are so soon to go away."

"Indeed!"

The Collector made another searching examination of the averted face, and a look of intelligence like a passing flash of light swept over his own.

"And where am I going, pray?" he asked quietly after a little pause.

"You know best yourself."

"Why, no; it would seem that you and Smybert are better informed."

"Are you not then soon going to quit America?"

"'T is not unlikely I may," returned the Collector, dryly, but with evanescent flashes of humor about the eyes.

"Then how dare you make such a fool o' me to have my picture painted?" cried Agnes, flashing up like tinder.

"Because I wanted it."

"You shall never have it."

"Because," pursued the Collector, with an evident enjoyment of the scene, "I want to remember in after years how you looked when you were young — "

"It will be nothing to you then how I looked," interrupted Agnes, bitterly.

"And besides," concluded the Collector, quietly, "it may be a consolation to your mother while you are gone."

There was an arrested movement in the bonneted head to turn around for a look of inquiry.

"For," he continued, putting his arm about her and drawing her close to him, "whenever I go and wherever I go, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, a certain other little person is to go with me."

At this moment the horse of his own accord drew up before the widow's door, when Frankland, under cover of the chaise-top, gently lifted his companion's face for a farewell kiss, and discovered two cheeks burning with shame and two eyes swimming with tears; and when the Collector called after her as she went up the gravel-walk, "You 'll go like a good girl for another sitting to-morrow?" the crestfallen sitter could find no voice for reply, but turning about with downcast eyes and a shamefaced air courtesied a silent assent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIDNIGHT PLOTTING.

ONE evening not long after the sittings for the portrait began, Frankland called with his horse and chaise to take Agnes to Roxbury. They went at the special request of Mrs. Shirley, who wanted her husband to hear Agnes sing, and had made the engagement the Sunday previous as she and Frankland were coming out from morning service at King's Chapel.

The sun had just set when they started; a yellow glow shut in by a bank of clouds lingered above the heights at Muddy River, while far to the left the Blue Hills of Milton gleamed like amethysts in the distance. They took their time in going, loitering almost to a walk along the marshy road that led across the Neck, where the fire-flies twinkled all about them in the neighboring marshes and the crickets and tree-toads filled the air with twilight clamor.

Arrived at the Governor's, they were puzzled at their reception. Mrs. Shirley's manner was distant and almost forbidding; it was quite clear she had forgotten the engagement. Formally civil, of course, in her greeting, she yet bade them no farther in than

the ante-room, where she sat down to talk with a preoccupied air and wandering attention.

"And where is his Excellency?" asked Frankland.

"I am sorry to say he is not at home," was the guarded answer.

"What pressing matter can have taken him back to town to-night?" continued the Collector, idly.

"I don't — that is, he — it is some official business, I believe."

Frankland stared. He had never before seen Madam so disconcerted; but notwithstanding the fact that their visit was plainly ill-timed, he was too much of an Englishman to allow himself unjustly to be put in the wrong. He accordingly remarked, quite pointedly, in reply to this halting explanation, —

"His Excellency must be called to account for running away when his lady invites company out to sing to him."

"His Excellency, unhappily, is not favored with the leisure of some of his brother officials, and has something more imperative than music to attend to," retorted her ladyship in a tone quite too sharp for her own house. She saw her mistake directly, and rising with a little air of bustle added with the next breath, "But that surely need not interfere with our pleasure; come, let us go into the drawing-room! Oblige me, Mr. Frankland!" she continued, leading the way; "open the harpsichord and bring forth the music while I ring for more candles!"

Seeming at first to take her usual interest in the music, Mrs. Shirley called for her favorite pieces and commended the performance intelligently. But it

soon became evident that it was only surface attention she was giving them, and that the core of her mind was profoundly occupied with something very different. Absorbed in their performance, the singers did not at first see this; it was only when Agnes, after a long duet, turned about to discuss some strain in it and discovered her hostess at the window in an attitude of strained expectation, that she awoke to the situation. With a woman's sympathy she directly made a move to go. With a man's obtuseness, Frankland became obstructive.

"Why, we are but just come, my dear; are you so soon tired?"

"I am not tired," said Agnes with uncompromising honesty.

"Then, begging your pardon, we will not go."

"Nay, but we must," whispered Agnes; and without another word she went straight to Mrs. Shirley to take leave. Frankland stared after her, nonplussed at this sudden obstinacy. Hitherto in social matters she had left him to take the lead. He was quite inclined to be vexed.

"I don't know what we are going home for," he said suggestively to Mrs. Shirley.

The latter simply courtesied and thanked him for his visit. Whether from preoccupation or intent, her manner could not have been more significant. There was no room for another word on the part of the Collector, and he moodily took his leave.

Coming forth into the night, they found the weather greatly changed. Thick clouds covered the whole sky, and far or near there was not a gleam of light

save for the bobbing lanterns on the chaise, which only served to make more intense the outer gloom.

Drawn by a swift and powerful horse, they set forth at a breakneck pace. The driver, perched on a low seat in front, held his mettled beast well in hand, but kept him to his speed with the intent of getting home before the storm broke. Sure of his way, he took little account of the condition of the road, which along the Neck abounded in pits and hollows. Despite his own skill and his stout vehicle, he was doomed to pay the penalty of his folly; for, bounding suddenly over a high hump on one side of the road, he plunged the next moment into a deep rut on the other, whence, in trying to extricate himself, he wrenched off a wheel.

With a loud imprecation on the man for his carelessness, Frankland sprang out to see what could be done. With some straps and cord they tried to repair the broken chaise so that it might at least drag them home; but after a long time wasted they abandoned the futile effort, and Frankland bade the man make the best of his way back to Roxbury for the night, while he and Agnes set forth on foot for home.

They had not gone far when a muttering of thunder above their heads warned them of the impending storm. Soon the lightning came in blinding flashes, lighting up the road for a long distance and then leaving them to flounder in pitchy darkness.

Next, a few big scattering drops rattled round them like the skirmishers of an advancing host which itself came on without loss of time. Frankland stripped off his coat to put upon Agnes. She laughed

at the notion, and they had a little quarrel about it, in which he prevailed.

What with the storm and darkness, it was late when they reached town. They were both drenched; but Agnes made so light of the discomfort that Frankland could not complain. They were, however, glad enough to find themselves near home, for the rain was growing heavier and the wind momently increasing in violence. Coming from the north, it blew directly in their faces; indeed, as they reached the Province House such a gust swept up Marlborough Street that they were fain to dodge behind the hedge and catch their breath. It was while crouching in their momentary shelter that Frankland noticed a light gleaming in the old mansion.

"What's doing here?" he muttered, as the light was seen to move from room to room.

"They're opening the door," whispered Agnes.

"And the light has disappeared. Hush! did you hear voices?"

"Yes, and I can see somebody moving."

"Two — three," counted Frankland as several dark figures emerged from the shadow of the porch and glided down the front steps.

"They're coming this way," whispered Agnes with a shudder; "let us run!"

"Now for another flash of lightning to make out these conspirators."

"They're close at hand. Mercy on us!"

"Hark!"

Holding fast to Frankland's arm, Agnes waited in terrified suspense as three figures, wrapped each in a

ong cloak, came slowly toward them down the path. They stopped near the gate, and their voices could be plainly heard.

"Despatch and secrecy are indispensable. 'T is dangerous confiding such a project to so large a body; but what are we to do?"

"'T is his Excellency himself," whispered Agnes with a gasp of relief.

"Do it without 'em, then; they 'd only obstruct the business, d——n 'em! Rely on your private friends."

"Impossible! Men and money must be had; 't would cost an immense sum."

"I will pledge your Excellency my whole fortune, barring bread and butter for my children."

"Ah, Auchmuty, if everybody had but your zeal!"

"And I," exclaimed a third voice, "will give you £500, and myself lead a regiment to the assault."

"Thanks, thanks, Gibson! if I had but a hundred men of your spirit—"

"There is Colonel Vaughan will do as much as we."

"Ay, ay, I have not a doubt of him; you are a goodly trio. But trust me, gentlemen; be guided by my experience. This is a step too vast to be undertaken except with the full strength and concurrence of the whole province."

"Then must we give up all thought of a surprise?"

"I hope not. I think by making a strong appeal to the General Court and impressing upon them the absolute need of secrecy, we may keep it mum, at least until the expedition is started, when it will be too late for the enemy to call for succor."

"But it will take a week to beat it into their heads, and no time is to be lost. By the latest advices the French fleet is already under way; and if it comes in time to relieve the fortress, there is not force enough in the country to take the place."

"Depend upon me; no time shall be lost," said the Governor, firmly. "I shall call a secret session of the General Court to-morrow, boldly lay it before them, put every man upon his honor, make a strong appeal, and take the chances. Meantime, gentlemen, much depends upon your zeal and secrecy. Let us hope for the best. The downfall of that nest of vipers means freedom for America. Good-night, good-night! I count upon your loyalty and prudence."

"And shall not count in vain," said Auchmuty.

"Ay," cried Gibson in a voice which rose high above the storm, "now that we have a leader worthy of the name we will follow to the death. Only set the ball in motion! Lead us on! lead us on!"

"Sh-h! Stone walls have ears," answered the Governor, cautiously. "Patience, gentlemen; and depend on me to do all that man can do. Good-night again!"

The three moved on and disappeared in the darkness.

"'Tis against the French; there is some great expedition on foot, and I have not heard of it," exclaimed Frankland, in a tone of chagrin. "I will not forgive Shirley."

"You!" cried Agnes in a startled tone.

"But I will demand a commission; he shall see I will have a hand in this business yet!"

"Nay, but you shall not!" cried Agnes in alarm,

seizing his arm energetically; "'t is against those bloody Frenchers, an' you 'd never come off alive. You shall not budge a step!"

"Why should you care?" asked Frankland, forgetting his pique at the Governor in gratification at this burst of feeling.

"Have done with your trifling!" returned Agnes, impatiently.

"What matters one life, more or less? Besides, I should stand as good chance of escape as another, and —"

"Have done, I say! I will hear no more of it! Stop, now," she continued beseechingly, as he was about to interrupt.

"There is but one sure way of stopping my mouth," he said, suiting an appropriate action to the word. "Ugh-h! love, your lips are like ice; you are freezing out here. Let us get home. Come! Come!"

Once more breasting the storm, they made the best of their way to the North End. Here, turning the corner of Tileston and Hanover Streets, they came upon an officious watchman who flashed a lantern in their faces until reassured by a word from the Collector he passed on, and the next moment made the welkin ring, crying the hour.

"Midnight!" Agnes cried aghast. "Father of Mercies! it cannot — it cannot be midnight!"

"And what if it is?" asked Frankland, calmly.

"I could n't — I 'd never dare arouse Widow Ruck at this time o' night. Oh," she continued in tones of pure consternation, "what shall I do? I was never up at such an awful hour before!"

They had arrived at the garden-gate, and stood looking up at the house wrapped in silence and gloom. Holding fast to Frankland's arm, Agnes looked helplessly to him for a suggestion.

Seized by an impulse as spontaneous as if caught from the electric fluid playing about them in the surcharged air, he cried: —

"Leave her, then! Leave her now and forever, and come with me!"

"You!" repeated Agnes, making a vague movement to withdraw.

"With me, where a home has long been waiting for you. 'T is time you came to take it. Agnes," he went on, gently taking her hands, "wherever we are together, there is home; we can never know any other home. Here — here is your real home, upon my heart. Come, come, then!"

"Wh — I — what are you saying?" she asked, in a bewildered way. "It is midnight — it is raining; I must go in —"

"Agnes, listen! God is witness of our love; God knows our hearts, and that we shall be faithful to each other. Why, then, should we care what men may think?"

"Nay, I care not what anybody says, if you honor me with your love."

"Come, come, then, with me to a home that will never be locked against you, — to your own true home!"

"What talk is this you hold to me?"

"Agnes — Agnes!" he cried, clasping her passionately in his arms, "I offer you all that I can, — my

home, my fortune, my heart, my eternal love, — all but my mere name, an empty sound."

"Eh!" she gasped, struggling to free herself.

"Nay, listen: an iron law, — a cruel, brutal law forbids me this; but let it not keep us apart! Have pity on me! Come with me now to your own home!"

"Let go your hold!" she cried in alarm. "Ye scare me; 't is the Evil One is talking! Let go, I say!"

Throwing him off with all her force, she ran swiftly to the house, and seizing the ponderous brass knocker plied it with frenzied hand until the whole neighborhood resounded with the blows.

CHAPTER XIX.

MARS AND CUPID.

NOT many days went by before the town got wind of his Excellency's midnight scheme. For weeks there had been mysterious whisperings about the streets, confidential groups in the corridors of the Town House, and much private closeting of strangers and officials with his Excellency. A dozen fantastic rumors were started, but nothing definite was known until one morning an ingenuous but too zealous member of the General Court was overheard at his lodgings loudly invoking the Divine blessing upon the purposed expedition against Louisbourg.

The news spread like wild-fire. A thrill ran through the community, a stirring of the blood and a creeping of the flesh. The bold were electrified, the timid dismayed. Wiseacres scoffed at a tale so incredible, but were presently put down by the plain facts, when the truth was established beyond peradventure that the Governor had been for months organizing a formidable armament against the famous Gibraltar of America.

Little by little the details leaked out: how the Governor had conceived the plan — the success of

which was destined to astonish Europe and cover his administration with glory — directly after the French descent upon Canseau; how, egged on by Colonel Vaughan, Captain Gibson, Judge Auchmuty, and a few other bold spirits, he had sent to England for a co-operating fleet, the advance squadron of which had already arrived in the West Indies under the noted Commodore Warren; how, swearing the members of the General Court to secrecy, he had carried the measure through that reluctant body by the bare majority of a single vote; how he had appealed to the neighboring provinces for men and money, which had been promptly promised; and how at last, looking about for a fit commander for this momentous undertaking, he had pitched upon that "mighty man of Kittery," Colonel William Pepperell.

So well the secret had been kept, that the preparations were already well advanced, and the day for the sailing of the expedition was near at hand. Now that the truth was known, moreover, all further disguise was needless; and the transports forthwith swarmed into the harbor, and the levies into the town, which was thereby speedily filled with the din of final preparation.

Frankland, like the rest, felt the stir in his blood, — that indefinable exaltation born of alien impulses angelic and brutal, the love of glory and the untamable animal instinct of destruction. The fever took strong hold of him; all the hereditary yearnings of his race — the old Cromwellian strain — fired his heart. He lost no time in waiting upon Governor Shirley to tender his services. As it chanced, his

Excellency was engaged, and could not be seen; whereupon he promptly despatched a note offering the aid of his sword and purse.

It was in the interval of doubt and suspense while awaiting an answer from the Governor, that he bethought him of Agnes. Perhaps he suddenly realized that of late she had been quite crowded out of her usual place in his thoughts by this brazen clamor of war. The old, old story; but if love, like laws, must be silent amid arms, it can yet, as the most potent and abiding passion, well afford to wait its turn, — a turn so sure to come.

The Collector showed traces of agitation as he approached the Widow Ruck's. He walked with a nervous and rapid step to the gate, paused, trifled with the latch, cast a furtive glance at the house, then passed on to the corner of Hanover Street. Presently he came back, strode directly up to the front door, and laid his hand upon the knocker. Again he hesitated, drew back, and stood with one steadfast and one averted foot, a picture of irresolution. A straw turned the balance. Suddenly there was heard a quick step coming down the street. Starting with a half-guilty movement, the Collector turned, sharply sounded the knocker, and fell to fidgeting with his lace ruffles in affected nonchalance for the benefit of the passer-by, who, however, turned out to be no more than an idle boy, who stared indifferently at the perturbed official as he trudged along.

Mercy, as it chanced, opened the door, and at sight of him was thrown straightway into her usual

state of trepidation, which was shown mainly by the spasmodic, half-hysterical noise in her throat — suggestive of something between a laugh and a cough — with which she interspersed her conversation.

"Oh, — hur-ur! — 't is you, sir! I am most glad, most — hur-ur! — to find it you — er — that is, some one, any one, we know; for, what with so many strange soldiers in the town, one scarce dares — hur-ur! — open the door at all. Will it please you walk in? — hur-ur! — your hat you may bestow upon the — er — oh!"

Deaf to her labored greeting, the preoccupied Collector, as soon as she made way for him, had stalked past her into the keeping-room.

Knowing nothing better to do, Mercy timidly followed, and having by a dexterous flank movement placed a high-backed chair between herself and any critical observation, stood nervously brushing her apron, smoothing her sparse hair, and furtively adjusting her tucker, as she awaited developments. The Collector, meanwhile, absorbed with a mental problem of his own, strode up and down the room, hat in hand, quite oblivious of her presence.

"You want to — to see *her*, I suppose?" ventured Mercy, at last, in a deprecating tone.

The Collector stopped in his march, stared at her blankly a moment, then with a sudden recollection of himself took the fluttered spinster by the hand, and leading her with much ceremony to the bottom of the stairs, said: —

"Do me the honor to say to Miss Agnes I would speak with her a few minutes!"

Coming unawares, this impressive act of courtesy would seem to have rendered Mercy for the moment a very little giddy. She mounted the stairs as if treading upon air, and was indeed so quite out of herself as to rush in upon the lodger without knocking, and announce in an excited whisper: —

"He is below, and would speak with you!"

Agnes, curled up in her favorite window-seat with her chin in her hand, and her eyes fixed upon the outer view, heeded neither the intruder nor her remark.

Mercy, meanwhile, had passed on to the mirror.

"Dear me!" she cried in a tone of distress, as she surveyed herself with critical anxiety, "if I had but put on my spotted lawn this morning! I had it in mind — this old gown, too, the very worst I have — What a grand way he has with him! He took me by the hand to the very stairs, and said, 'Do me the honor,' said he, 'to say to Miss Agnes I would speak with her!'"

The lodger remained quite unmoved by this animated account.

"'T is ever my luck!" continued the chagrined Mercy, occupied again with her toilet. "To think of my having on this old taffeta, which would long since have been cast to the rag-bag but for mother — she — I only hope he marked not the darning of the sleeves! Think you he could see them?"

Receiving no answer, the spinster's mind was recalled to her errand.

"What! did you not hear? He wants to see you, I say."

"I shall not go down."

"But he sent for you himself, — he bade me say — "

"I shall not go down."

"Why, *you* need not fear; *your* gown is fine enough for anybody; and," continued the persistent messenger, with a critical glance at the lodger, "there 's not a lock of your head astray."

Even this kindly encouragement failed of effect. Mercy was puzzled. With some experience of the lodger's moods, she went over to the window-seat and anxiously studied the averted face. It evidently did not prove easy reading.

"What shall I say? 'T is most awkward to keep him waiting thus."

"Say I shall not go down!"

"But you — There 's nothing the matter, I hope?"

"Nothing."

"What pretext, then, can I offer?"

"None."

"Eh? — you will never — you cannot send a word like that to *him!* No reason? 'T would be most unmannerly. And after all his kindness to you — "

The lodger violently changed her position.

"He — of course he would be angered, and he is in a most gracious vein this morning. If you could but have seen him when he — "

"Go away!"

Shocked at this rough dismissal, Mercy went out and stood upon the landing, leaning over the balusters and cracking her fleshless finger-joints in helpless perplexity.

The sound of the impatient Collector pacing up and down the keeping-room roused her at last to action. There was nothing to do but go down.

"Well?" he exclaimed, striding toward her as she entered the room, "she is coming?"

"N-no; she —"

"Not coming? Did you tell her who was waiting?"

"Ye-es; I —"

"What 's the matter?"

It was a trying situation. The excited Collector stood hanging anxiously upon her words. Strength of mind failed, and the lips which from earliest childhood had been trained to truth now lent themselves to guile.

"She — she —"

"Eh?"

"She feels herself not—hur-ur—quite well. She — hur-ur —"

Stammering and blushing, the bungler would have betrayed herself to eyes far less keen than those which were now suspiciously riveted upon her.

"Did she make that excuse?"

"N-no — hur-ur — she —"

"Did she send any message?"

"No; I — I besought her to — to send some pretext, but she —"

"Humph!"

The Collector stood for a moment biting his lips, and then, without a word or a salute to the humiliated Mercy, stalked out of the house.

An hour afterwards a note came bearing his seal. One of the housemaids took it up. Agnes looked at the superscription and dropped it unopened.

The next day she saw it lying there upon the window-seat as she was going out to work in the garden. She took it up and again threw it down, but five minutes afterwards came all the way up from the garden to read it.

The effect of the reading was startling. She sprang up with a look of consternation, put on her bonnet and mantle and left the house.

Hurrying with might and main she took her way directly to the Province House. There, stopped by the sentry at the door, she explained that she was a friend of the Governor's, and had come to see him on important business.

Quite accustomed to mystery in the Louisbourg matter, the sentry let her pass without question. Entering the great hall, she was at a loss how to proceed. All was bustle and confusion. In and out the rooms on the ground floor and up and down the quaint old staircase officers in uniform, civilians, ship-captains, servants in livery, were hurrying to and fro.

Several of these busy people Agnes questioned as to how she might get speech with the Governor, but met with nothing but rebuff; it was plainly the popular impression that a woman had no business there.

At last, plucking a passing lackey by the sleeve, Agnes slipped a fee into his willing palm, and repeated her question.

"He 's in yonder room, ma'am," pointing to a door on the left; "but there 's no use *your* trying to get speech with him," answered the man, with a look which not even the fee still warm in his hand saved from a tinge of contempt.

"I must have speech with him."

"He 's too busy now-a-days to hold parley with petticoats."

"He 's a friend of mine."

"Beg pardon, ma'am!" said the man, with an accession of respect.

"And I have come to see him on business. Go you in and say Miss Agnes Surriage is waiting without to have a word with him."

The man shook his head. Agnes took out her purse.

"No use, ma'am; no use. I would n't go into yonder room without orders for all ye ha' in 't."

At this moment a tall, gaunt, martial figure stalked past, with his sword rattling about his heels.

"There!" whispered the lackey, looking after him in admiration, — "there goes one dare go in, and without knocking, too, I warrant him; 't is the great Colonel Vaughan."

Agnes no sooner heard this announcement than to the lackey's amazement she darted after the stranger and walked boldly in after him as he entered the Governor's room.

Once inside, Agnes paused a minute to look around. It was a busy-looking scene. Several secretaries were hard at work at desks placed about the side of the room, while in the middle, at a large table,

sat his Excellency bending over an outspread map to which he constantly referred while talking to the stout man in a scarlet uniform at his side. The latter, Vaughan greeted with a military salute as Colonel Pepperell.

As soon as Agnes perceived Governor Shirley, regardless of his occupation or companions, she stepped quickly forward and said: —

"May it please your Excellency, I would fain have a word with you."

The Governor looked up in astonishment at this bold interruption, and a frown of annoyance clouded his face on recognizing the intruder.

"Agnes! what are you doing here, girl?"

"I come hither to see your Excellency on a matter of moment."

"I have no time to attend to you. I am busy. Go and see Mrs. Shirley!"

"No!" cried Agnes, undaunted; "'t is you I must speak with, and I have but a word to say. Take heed, I pray you; let not Mr. Frankland go to the war!"

"Hoity-toity, what now?" cried his Excellency, while a passing look of amusement relaxed the strained lines of his face.

"Ho! ho! ho!" roared Vaughan, roughly; "who is that? The dandy young Collector, say you? And are his dainty limbs, forsooth, to be laid up in lavender here at home, while our bones are to be given over to Canadian crows?"

"Ay! and the fittest use to put them to!" retorted Agnes, highly offended.

"Good! she has mettle, that wench," said Vaughan aside to Pepperell, who stood gravely awaiting the end of the episode.

"He is young and over-rash, your Excellency," pleaded Agnes. "He would never come home alive from those bloody Frenchers. All his kin are thousands of miles across the sea, and his poor mother would die of grief if any harm befell him."

"Ay, ay! your Excellency," interposed Vaughan, with a fresh outburst of laughter. "Have compassion on his mother, — so poor, so old, and so far away!"

Deaf to this mockery, Agnes kept her eyes anxiously fixed upon the Governor's face.

"I have no power, my good girl," said the latter, not unkindly, "even if I would, to stay Mr. Frankland from going to the war. And for the matter of his mother, half the young men who are going leave mothers behind."

"But, your Excellency — "

"No more; I've no time to waste. I can do nothing for you; so get you gone and leave us to our work!"

Agnes withdrew very much discomfited, and went home with a heavy heart, where she spent a laborious afternoon in writing the following answer to Frankland's note: —

MOST DEAR SIR, — I know not after what manner I ought to adress you, nor upon what patern order my behavyor towards you. If hitherto you have lifted me up to a grate hight of happines and fortune, you have now plunged

me down into more dolefull misery. I am, indeed, in greevus case and know not which way I am to turn for counsell nor what I am to think nor what again 't is right and honerable to do.

I can think of no better way of proceeding than to tell you without lett or reserve what is in my hart. I have, as you are awair, small skill in writeing, and may fale to make you understand what I would fane say; but I pray you give it thought and heed.

I shall first confess that I was much afrighted and grately angered at the language you lately held to me. I see not that even your grate bounty (of which I daly strive to recount the mesure) should give you the right to offer me such indignitty. You say you was carried away by passhun, and I would fane beleeve it.

You speak of an iron law that withholds you from doing as you would — that is a law of man's devise. I too have a law which withholds me from doing wrong, — a golden law, a law of God's. Tell me now which were it better to transgres.

I shall confess again that when you came hither yesterday to see me my hart was filled with bitternes and wrath. I thought all my love and grattitude to you was quite at an end. I now see my greevous error.

It needed but I should read your letter for it to flame up again to a prodiggus hight. My anger is all melted away, and I am now quakeing with horrid fear. Do not, I beseech you, be so cruel as to leave me! 'T is an awfull bisness you would go upon. There is small chanse, from what I hear, for anyboddy to come back. What is your single sord and arm in so mitety a host? What will his Majesty say if you dessert your post? Think of your mother and what would happen to her if aught befell you. I do

not bid you think of me, for alas what would it avale? But if you will persist to go in spite of all entreety, then I must needs follow after. I could not rest here with the thought that you was yonder and your life in perill.

Your obedient, loving, humble servant,

AGNES.

CHAPTER XX.

RINGING TRUE.

RECEIVING no answer to his application, Frankland waited again upon the Governor, when, it would seem, his Excellency, either having no commission to give him, or unwilling to be accessory to his leaving his post without consultation with the Home Government, found means to persuade him that to go off without leave, upon an expedition of duration so uncertain and issue so doubtful, would be held by his Majesty a most culpable and unpardonable neglect of duty.

With heavy heart, therefore, the Collector abandoned his purpose and stood by in silent chagrin while the jubilant troops with beating drum and clashing cymbal marched down to embark upon one of the most romantic crusades of modern times.

And one fine morning away they went, — a white-winged flock of snows and frigates and transports, while flapping far aloft from the Commander's vessel streamed the precious banner bearing Whitefield's sacred motto: "Nil desperandum Christo duce."

The guns from the North Battery and the Sconce belched forth salvos of farewell, and the whole populace of the town, gathered upon the shore, cheered themselves hoarse in benediction.

All this "post-haste and romage in the land" was succeeded by a dead calm. Tired Boston turned back with a sigh of relief to its workshops and counting-houses. It was like skipping in a trice from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, — this coming back to the prosaic and commonplace from so long sojourn in the world of the imagination.

With his official duties reduced to the merest routine on account of the prostration of commerce, with all his favorite companions — the young men of spirit and enterprise — gone on the expedition, never had Puritan New England seemed such a bald, drear, humdrum place of abode to the dejected Collector. A northeast storm brought matters to a crisis.

At the very lowest ebb-tide of cheer he went around that evening to see Agnes. He was shown unexpectedly into the room where she and the widow were sitting.

"You did not go!" she cried, springing to her feet, and trembling so violently that involuntarily he put forth his hand to prevent her falling.

"No," he answered mechanically, while spots of color glowed in a curious way on his cheek and his eyes suddenly brightened.

Meantime the widow saluted him twice without notice, nor did he heed a word of her explanation for not retiring — that it was the only room in the house where they could have a fire in summer.

"This storm," began Agnes, making an effort to talk, "is —"

She paused; the searching look with which he regarded her was very disconcerting.

"Eh?" exclaimed the widow, with a methodical person's natural annoyance at an unfinished sentence.

"'T is bad for the fleet, I suppose."

"Ye-es — no — they won't mind a little blow like this," answered the Collector, half irritably, as if impatient at a question so irrelevant to his thought.

"You have not seen the garden in a long time."

"Humph! — the garden? No-o; very true."

"Everything is much grown, and many new things have come up."

"Er-r, yes; you can't help it; they always do."

"Those last seeds you gave me — I have forgotten the name."

"Indeed!"

"You will remember, perhaps?"

"I? No; upon my word; not at all. Seeds?"

Nothing, it would seem, could be more futile and unsatisfactory than this talk; and it is not quite clear why it produced such a tonic effect upon Frankland. But the fact remains, that having gone into the Widow Ruck's with thoughts of suicide, he came forth with a cheerful aspect and a good appetite for his supper.

Later in the evening, with the purpose perhaps of restoring his long-disturbed nervous equilibrium, he went off on a vague tramp in the darkness and storm, and coming back felt so like himself again that he ordered some brandy and water and went to bed singing.

Next day came a budget of English letters. Out of a dozen he put aside two for a more attentive reading. Having duly despatched the less interesting, he

settled back in his chair with the chosen two. The first was from Walpole.

From the very salutation the charm of that famous letter-writer seized fast hold upon the reader's attention. With delighted looks and lips gradually relaxing to a smile, his eyes danced down page after page of malicious gossip or witty insinuation. A muttered exclamation now and then and a movement in his seat afforded an involuntary tribute to some quip or thrust too good to be passed over in immobility. But whether it were that such a surfeit of wit palled upon his taste, or that he had lost his earlier zest for such matter, it is noteworthy that the Collector finished the letter with less extravagant marks of approval, and that indeed before he reached the signature the spirit had quite vanished from his smile, and left it but an unpleasant grimace. Tossing the letter upon the table, he folded his hands back of his head and looked long and fixedly at a spot on the wall.

Presently he remembered his mother's letter, and opened it. Quite different was the quiet interest with which he puzzled out the crossed and recrossed lines from the hungry look with which he had devoured the first. When about half through, however, his expression violently changed. Throwing down the elaborately folded sheet with a muttered oath, he sprang up and traversed the room with angry steps.

Presently he stopped, as if with a sudden resolve. Catching up the two letters he folded them together and sent them off with the following note: —

DEAREST AGNES, — Read these letters. See for your self how like a badger I am baited. See how they pursue me even to the ends of the earth! Read, and tell me whether they are to be hearkened to or not! These are but two out of a multitude who would fill the air with clamor and leave me no peace on earth if I should dare follow the dictates of my own heart and order my life after my own fashion.

Pity, then, I pray you, my doubt, irresolution, and weak ness, and have patience with your devoted

FRANKLAND.

Next day the letters were returned. A deep flush overspread his face as he unfolded them and found within no comment. Crumpling the sheets, he threw them straightway into the fire, forgetting, perhaps, that he had not yet finished reading his mother's.

After two days' continuous brooding over the matter, the suspense became intolerable, and one evening he seized his hat and started for Tileston Street.

On the way it suddenly occurred to him as significant that on his last visit the widow had been present. Was her presence accidental? He had a vague remembrance of her making an explanation. Loitering to frame some pretext for getting speech with Agnes alone, he was joined by the Rev. Samuel Mather on the way to his new meeting-house from his home near by on Moon Street.

"Come, Mr. Collector," cried that amiable but eccentric parson, taking his arm, "come along with me to prayer-meeting, and leaven your worldliness with a little grace!"

"Prayer-meeting to-night, you say?" asked Frankland, with sudden interest.

"Yes; behold me on the way thither now. Come, and you shall be made a special subject of supplication in return for the box of lemons you sent me."

"I had ample payment in the clever verses returned."

"Ah! I am proof against flattery. I know the rhymes were indifferent, — I am not strong in the poetic way, — but the receipt for punch enclosed, you will find infallible."

Stopping on the corner of Tileston Street to continue their talk, the Collector chanced to look up, and a fleeting little change of expression swept over his face.

The movement, however slight, did not escape his alert companion, who, turning to discover the cause, beheld the widow and Mercy close upon them, on their way to prayer-meeting.

"Good-evening, Widow!" cried the parson, quickly, in a tone conscientiously cordial, at the same time bowing with an elaboration very near to a flourish.

Heeding neither the words nor the salute, the widow passed on with an expression that would have done honor to Saint Stephen.

Tipping Frankland a solemn wink, the parson waited until they were out of ear-shot.

"That worthy woman regards me with relentless hostility, and yet I never in word or deed did her the smallest injury. In ten minutes she will be praying — none with greater unction — 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive,' etc. Heigh-ho! these crea-

tures made in God's image are queer cattle. Come, you 'd better go to the prayer-meeting; you must need praying for."

"No, thank you!" cried Frankland, seizing both the parson's hands with sudden effusion. "I did, yesterday; I did this morning; I did an hour ago, but not now: somebody has forestalled you!"

Puzzled at this queer speech and this sudden fervor, Mather had no time to demand an explanation, and the friends parted.

Shown into the keeping-room to wait for Agnes, Frankland sat down in the widow's own rush-bottomed chair, and glancing at a book on the table, into which her spectacles had just been thrust as a book-mark, marvelled the more at her recent exhibition of spirit, on reading the title: "The Case of Satan's Fiery Darts in blasphemous suggestions and hellish annoyances as they were considered in several sermons heretofore preached in the congregation in Brattle Street, Boston, May, 1711, by Benj: Colman, and now published by the Desire of Some who having suffered by such Temptations would thus (by the Will of God) minister to the Direction and Support of others in like spiritual Trouble and Distress."

Agnes came down without reluctance or embarrassment, but looking very grave and pale.

"I do not wonder at your looks, my dear girl," cried Frankland, hurrying to meet her. "I was a coward to send you those letters, to let you into a struggle which belonged alone to me. But I am a poor creature. It seemed I could never fight it out alone. I was weak enough to want you to know it was no

easy matter for me to do what seemed only a just and simple thing."

"No, it is I who have been at fault, grievously at fault. I see it all now. But pray you pardon me! Remember, I was young. I knew nothing of this you call the world."

She paused. His face was shining with eagerness. He made a movement to speak, but she put up her hand with an appealing gesture.

"You have meant to confer a great blessing upon me," she continued, speaking with painful repression, but with a voice free from any tearful note. "I cannot talk of that. I have no words fit for such high matters. I hold you quit of all consequences, but I pray God it may not prove you have done me needless wrong in taking me away from yonder rude life, to which now I must return."

"'Return'!" he cried, with a sudden burst of laughter which was almost shocking in its discord. "Yes, when the sun returns on his course, when the river rolls backward from the sea — but not until! 'Return'!" he repeated, clasping her rapturously in his arms. "Never, my darling! Never! Never! Never!"

Struggling to free herself, Agnes stared at him in bewilderment.

"No, no, no!" he went on in the same ecstatic and incomprehensible strain; "the struggle is over and the victory mine. 'T is plain now why I was not suffered to go to Louisbourg, — I had a battle of my own to fight nearer at hand. But 't is fought and won; 't is all settled, darling. You will never be my

Lady Frankland, because I shall never be Sir Charles. I will resign title and inheritance in favor of my brother, and I have influence enough at Court to have the act confirmed. No, you will never live upon hereditary estates, never be received at Court, never have an escutcheon, consort with the great world, and shine in the ranks of fashion! But what are title and fortune? You might tire of one and lose the other. But we — we shall never get tired of each other, eh? — nor ever lose one another this side heaven; and so, if you will be content with plain Harry Frankland, without a penny to bless himself with but his beggarly official salary, here he is — yours to all eternity."

Deadly pale, Agnes stood, as it seemed, unable to accept words so "wild and whirring" in their plain purport.

"Plain Mrs. Frankland and love in a cottage seem not to enchant you," said the anxious Collector, waiting in suspense for Agnes to speak.

But she did not speak; she only stared at him with a fixed and troubled look.

"I am nothing, then. 'T was but the title and fortune you cared for, after all," he continued in a quizzical tone, in which, however, there was a trace of pique. "Come, you shall speak; if you feel no joy yourself, you shall at least sympathize with mine."

Shaking her head in a dazed way, Agnes still remained silent.

"Speak, I say! Speak!" he cried, growing impatient.

"It cannot be!" she said hoarsely.

"Silly girl, it *is!* All is done. You have nothing to do but nod your head."

"It cannot be!"

"What would you have? I give up all the world for you. I offer you my hand, my heart, and my honorable name; and have you nothing to say?"

"Yes."

"Ah, rogue! So you have been tormenting me?"

"I have to say —"

"Go on!"

"That I will never accept them!"

These words were pronounced in a voice scarcely above a whisper, but with a significant expression.

Frankland, realizing the purpose in her resolute face, grew suddenly anxious.

"Agnes, Agnes, what are you saying?"

"Let me go! I cannot talk; I must go away by myself!" she cried, as if stifling.

"No!" he cried, blazing up passionately; "you shall not go. You are mine! You shall not escape me! You shall not trifle with me! I will hear no more such folly! I have done all that man can do to content you. Come to me on what terms you will, but come you must! Oh, Agnes," he concluded with a melting touch of pathos, "can it be that you do not love me, girl?"

He was holding her tightly pressed in his arms. She turned suddenly and kissed him upon the forehead, then bursting from his hold ran sobbing from the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

RUNNING TO COVER.

"MERCY," said the widow next morning, after the lodger had left the breakfast-table, "you 'd better see what 's the matter!"

The widow sat at the tray washing her precious breakfast-china, which she never suffered to go into the kitchen. Mercy looked up in surprise. Her mother had behaved unusually.

"You noted it, then?"

The widow slowly closed her large bilious-looking eyes, with the effect of nodding, — a habit which perhaps she had acquired at meeting in acquiescing with silent unction to strong points in the sermon.

"She did not eat a morsel," continued Mercy, moving into more confidential proximity.

The widow went on wiping her dishes with an air not at all encouraging to further conversation.

"Nor sleep a wink either, but walked the floor all night over my head. What wonder she looks like a ghost!"

The widow closed her eyes again and carefully set down a cup which she had wiped to a glittering polish inside and out.

"And I know what it means," continued Mercy, unconsciously cracking her finger-joints in her increas-

ing agitation; "*he* was here last night while we were gone to meeting. I found one of his queer-lookin' gloves on the floor this mornin'."

She paused to note the effect of this impressive announcement.

"Stop that!" said the widow, in a long-suffering tone.

Mercy looked disconcerted, but understood at once and desisted her knuckle exercise.

"If she 's ill," said the widow, pushing the tray of clean dishes towards Mercy to put away, and bringing the conversation back to the starting-point, "I will see what can be done. If it 's anything else," she added, drawing down her spectacles from her forehead to the bridge of her nose and casting a significant glance at her daughter, "don't you intermeddle!"

Thus instructed, Mercy followed to the garden on her diplomatic errand. She found the lodger walking abstractedly up and down among her flower-beds.

"Deary me! how the rain has started the weeds!" she began.

No notice was taken of the remark.

"'T is just as Mr. Gee said last night at meetin': weeds and tares are like sins in the heart, ever ready to spring up when one is not on the watch."

The lodger, who had instinctively turned to move away, stopped in a listening attitude. Mercy slyly took advantage of the opportunity to come nearer.

"But the storm is n't over yet," she went on, "you may see by the wind. My father used to say — and

he followed the sea — there 's no chance of a clearing when the wind backs round. Mother never heeds the wind; she goes by the goose-bone."

The lodger moved on.

"What has happened to this lily?" clutching haphazard at any subject. "It looks blighted; 't is a great pity; the lily is a beautiful flower. Do you think it prudent to stay out here in the damp air without your hood? See, 't is beginning to rain already!"

"Yes."

"Oh! — and you have so many beautiful roses too! This white one is my favorite. I have heard say yours is the finest collection in town. You are looking pale this morning; do you — "

"Get you gone and leave me in peace!"

"Ye-es, surely — of course — " cried the discomfited Mercy, sniffing violently. "I — I but wanted — mother said if there was anything we might do — but never mind!"

She turned and started toward the house, but directly felt herself seized from behind.

"Pardon — stop! Pardon me! You meant it in kindness. I thought not on what I was saying. I thank you for your good intent. You can do nothing for me; there 's nothing to be done; there 's nothing ails me. 'T is only that I want not to be plagued with talk, — I want to be alone."

With this tumultuous speech she rushed off to the house and up to her own room. Pausing only to put on her hood and cloak, she hurried down and left the house while Mercy was still in the act of giving the widow an account of the interview.

Proceeding swiftly across town as if with a defined purpose, she set out on the road to Roxbury. There was no wind, and the soft summer rain fell in crystal plumb-lines from the clouds. Half-way across the Neck she came to a sudden standstill. Rolling leisurely toward her, attended by a mounted servant, came a chaise. In it sat Mrs. Shirley.

With a half-shocked look at this sudden appearance of the person she was going to see, Agnes stood for a moment in the midst of the road. Directly regaining self-control, she stepped out of the beaten track into a bed of brambles by the wayside, and facing about threw back her hood as if to secure recognition.

The movement was successful; in a moment the chaise drew up before her.

"Agnes! — why, how now, child? What are you doing here?" exclaimed the astonished occupant, as her keen eye with one sweeping glance took in the details of the figure before her, — the distraught look, the pallid face, the disordered hair, the hanging hood and dripping cloak.

"I was coming — I — I had it in mind to — "

"Surely you must be taking leave of your wits, my dear," interposed the elder lady, with the clever matron's readiness to lavish advice. "You are getting into very strange ways, I fear. What's this, I hear, of your forcing your way in upon his Excellency in the rush of business, before the expedition sailed, and begging, forsooth, that Mr. Frankland should not be suffered to go to the war?"

Agnes put up her hand with a little pleading movement, as if for attention; but her mentor was

not to be cheated of the luxury of performing an agreeable duty.

"I assure you, my dear, upon my word, I never heard of such a prank, — a young girl like you interceding for a gentleman of his rank!"

Something in the looks or intonation of the speaker must have given unusual point to her words, for the listener started as if stung; and the expression of pain and dismay which swept like a cloud over her face was quickly succeeded by one of pride, which compressed her bloodless lips and hardened the lines around her mouth.

But clever, high-minded, worldly-wise Mrs. Shirley could not be expected to take note of every little trick of a foolish girl's face; she was intent upon doing her duty, — a plain, bounden duty, in the performance of which she will be upheld by every well-regulated matron in the land. Without too much regarding the effect of her words, then, she went on: —

"Have a care, my dear, have a care! Take guidance in such matters, or you will make yourself the laughing-stock of the town."

The listener stood like a statue, and had not the grace to utter a word of thanks for all this precious counsel.

"But what are you doing, tell me, so far from home? Come, get in here with me out of the rain!" continued the considerate matron, making room on the seat beside her.

"Many thanks, madam, but I mind not the storm," returned Agnes, coldly.

"Not you, I dare swear, until you have had an

ague. But come, I say; I will set you down at your own door!"

Agnes shook her head with an obstinate air, and Mrs. Shirley gave a sign to the driver.

"Good-by, then; I can waste no more time upon you! Remember what I have said, and come and see me more often, that I may school you to better manners."

The chaise started on, but scarcely had the wheels made a dozen revolutions when it stopped again. The motherly woman within was haunted by a suppressed movement of relenting, a covert appeal, in the big black eyes that had just been gazing so intently into her face. She looked back and spoke:

"Did you want to say anything to me, my child?"

Agnes hesitated; confidence is a shy bird, and once driven to the hedge comes not back at bidding. It was as well perhaps that neither of them could foresee the life-long consequences hanging upon the answer to that question. It was but a moment. A shake of the head, and the chaise drove on.

With a sigh, sudden and deep-drawn, as if relieving heart and nerves from violent tension, Agnes gazed after it, grateful then and grateful through all the after years for those parting words of kindness from one upon whose living face she was never to look again.

Back and forth over a barren stretch of a dozen yards in the road she walked for a long time after the chaise disappeared. The rain, meantime, had ceased and the rising wind rolled up the clouds into heavy masses which slowly floated off to sea.

The impulse, whatever it was, which at last started Agnes homeward, seemed to gather force and intensity as she went; for having reached the thickly settled quarter of the town, she bent her steps with almost feverish haste to the Town Dock. Here searching out a boatman she demanded impatiently to be taken to Cambridge.

What with sailing much of the time in the eye of the wind and with the current strong against them, it proved, however, rather a tedious passage. Agnes, although well-skilled in the management of all kinds of craft and seeing for herself the difficulties of the way, sat in the stern chafing at the delay, and giving every now and then sharp directions for the management of the ketch which the astonished skipper instinctively obeyed.

Having at last reached their landing, Agnes lost no time in making her way to President Holyoke's house. There she was told that the worshipful president was over at the College. She set forth at once to seek him out, but had not proceeded far when she saw some one approaching. Despite the increase in years and infirmity, she recognized at once the venerable figure of her old pastor of Marblehead.

She stopped, and stood awaiting his approach. He walked slowly and as if rapt in thought. With painful anxiety she studied the details of a face which every step brought nearer. Authority and seclusion had wrought their due effect. In those pale, set features, in those severe intellectual eyes, there was no invitation to confidence. With sinking heart she drew aside and stood meekly awaiting recognition.

In a moment more he was abreast of her. Holding her breath in suspense, she fixed upon him a wild, beseeching glance.

Recognizing the fact of a person in the highway, and it may be with the more complex impression of a female, the reverend dignitary vouchsafed a stiff bow of formal courtesy, and with the introverted, undistinguishing eye of age passed on his way.

Making a vague movement as if to detain him, Agnes sank upon the wet ground with a groan of despair. There she lay until aroused by a passing wayfarer. Irritated by the man's suspicious questions, she repelled all offers of assistance and alone made her way back to the ketch.

It was just before nightfall when she arrived in town. Although nearly exhausted by fatigue and hunger, she yet shrank from going home, and turning as if by natural instinct to the sea, wandered down along the docks. Here all was familiar; a thousand associations of childhood, rude scenes, rough words, unsavory odors, hallowed by memory, came like voices from home to comfort and tranquillize her.

Strolling out upon one of the larger wharves, she stood leaning upon a pier listening to the swashing of the water as it broke among the piles and dashed up with a thump against the floor beneath her feet. The last glow of sunset was fading from the sky. Deepening shadows crept in and out among the crowded docks and around about the scattered fleet of shipping, as it were the advance of an unknown enemy occupying with mysterious force every coigne of vantage.

Suddenly Agnes started from her place in violent agitation and uttered a cry. From the dark prow of a neighboring vessel lifted out of the black mass of shadow by an incoming wave there had gleamed dimly through the lingering light the magic words: "The Pathfinder."

With eager steps she made her way around to the vessel's side, crying as she hurried down the dock and peered over among the men who were idling upon deck: —

"Job — Job — are you there?"

A chorus of answers came from the quizzical crew.

"Sail — ho!"

"Ship ahoy there, petticoat!"

"Job — is he there among ye?"

"Oh, never mind him; he 's forgotten ye!"

"He 's got another one now."

"He has 'em in every port."

"Come and see us, beauty!"

"Give us a kiss, and we 'll tell ye, sweetheart!"

"Have done with your gibing. Shame upon you, that cannot give a civil answer to a lady! Keep your jests for them that like them, and tell me now if you have a shipmate called Job."

The rich contralto voice and the tone of dignity had an instant effect.

"Redden, ye mean, mum?"

"Yes."

"He 's ashore on leave."

"Where can he be found? Does any one know? Speak!" The questions came with uncontrollable impatience.

"Ye might try the Plav'rers, mum.'

"The what?"

"The Two Plav'rers; don't ye know the Two Plav'rers? Ye 're a stranger, sure, not to know the Plav'rers — "

"Yes, yes. I know it now, — the old inn. There 's for ye!" and flinging a handful of small coins from her purse she disappeared in the darkness.

The quaint old hostelry, known variously as the "Salutation" tavern, and the "Two Palaverers," from the two nondescript figures painted on its sign-board who were popularly supposed to represent two gossips in the act of greeting, was situated on Salutation Alley, and was a favorite and popular resort for the humbler classes.

It was already lighted and thronged when Agnes arrived, although so early in the evening. Unconscious of the looks of wonder and admiration which followed her, Agnes made her way through a group of idlers at the doorway, and so on into the tap-room, which was filled with a motley assembly of sailors and mechanics.

Standing in the doorway and scanning the room with an anxious look, Agnes almost immediately found the object of her search. Controlling herself with evident effort, she went quietly up to a table where three sailors were drinking, and touching the arm of one who was seated with his back toward the door, she whispered in her old Marblehead dialect, —

"Job, I want ye. Come wi' me, mon!"

The sailor started to his feet as though thrilled by an electric shock.

"Eh — her-rt 'n' soul! — be 't ye, Ag?" he stammered. "Sumthin' the motter-r wi' ye?"

"Ay!"

He stopped for no more, but went out with her directly. By a cautioning movement she restrained him from speaking until they were beyond ear-shot.

"Wha' be 't? Out wi' 't!" he cried hoarsely. "Oi know'd 't wor-r comin'. Oi ha' been expectin' 't. Out wi' 't, oi soy!"

"Job! Job!" she cried, holding fast on to him with trembling hands, "'f ye ever-r loved me, mon, take me home to my mother-r!"

Throwing herself into his arms, she gave way to long-pent emotion in a violent fit of sobbing.

"Ay, ay! Thet oi will. Sh-h! — ther', now! don't tak' on so! Oi ha' ye safe. Nothin' sha' hor-rm ye! Ther', now, oi soy, ha' done! Hor-rken! hor-rken, now, to me a bit!" whispered Job, as the sobbing grew less violent. "'F ther's ony need, we 'll quit this out o' hond, 'f we ha' to go afoot; but 'f ther's no haste, we 'll foind some place near by the wā-ar-rf yonder-r, wher' ye can stay th' noight; an' agin daybreak oi 'll ha' the boat ready."

"No, no," sobbed Agnes; "ther's no such gret haste. Oi 'll stay th' noight wher' oi am."

"Wher' ye be!"

"Yonder, wher' oi ha' lived ever-r sin' oi cam' hither-r. They know nothin' ther' o' th' motter-r 's drivin' me away, an' 'll gi' me good treatment. Ye shall take me back thither-r, 'n' oi 'll wait yer-r comin' i' th' mornin'!"

Clinging tenderly to the arm of her old companion,

as though she had left him but yesterday, Agnes led the way back to the widow's house.

"Job, Job!" she cried, with a little shudder of misgiving as they stood at the gate, "you will not fail me?"

"No more 'n oi ha' ever-r failed ye afore."

CHAPTER XXII.

A SIDE ISSUE.

THAT evening Mercy was greatly surprised at her mother's sudden determination not to go to the "praise-meeting." There was good ground for surprise; for the widow had never before been known to stay away from a religious meeting except in case of necessity. Here, not only was there no apparent cause for absence, but she vouchsafed no explanation.

"I hope nothing 's the matter?" ventured Mercy, with a look of kindling curiosity.

"Nothing!"

"Oh!"

"Glory will go with you," said the widow, referring to Gloriana the cook, and quietly ignoring the sensation she had created. "See that she has a seat where she may hear, for the occasion will be of benefit to her."

Mercy asked no more questions. She never resorted to cross-examination with her mother. There, experience had evidently taught her to await the slow movement of a subtler process. Meantime it may be doubted whether she went to the service in a frame of mind fitted to profit by religious teaching.

Directly the widow heard the garden-gate click behind them, a change took place in her manner.

She walked about the room needlessly adjusting the furniture, closed the wooden shutters, kindled a fire upon the hearth, put a lighted candle upon the hall table, taking a stealthy look at herself in the antique mirror as she passed.

Coming back to the keeping-room, she settled down in a rush-bottomed chair with her last new pamphlet, entitled "Meditations representing a Glimpse of Glory; or, a Gospel Discovery of Immanuel's Land."

Upon this occasion, however, she seems to have been satisfied by a very fleeting glimpse of glory; for she laid aside the book after a few pages, and took her knitting.

It was while she was in the act of shifting her needles after the very first round, that Elder Hawkins was ushered into the room.

Receiving his visit as a matter of course, the widow rose, courtesied, and placed a chair. He sank into it with a dry little cough, which seemed to be scraped up somewhere in his mouth as a conversational stop-gap, and which, indeed, for a mere inarticulate sound, proved to be susceptible of astonishing variety of expression.

"I am happy, Sister Ruck," he began with a side-way glance at the widow, "at finding you at home — and alone."

"I could not do less than remain at home after the message with which I was honored — "

The Elder interjected an embarrassed cough.

"And you chance to find me alone because of Mercy's going to the praise-meeting."

"Ye-es — er — the meeting, it slipped my mind, or I should have craved the present privilege for some other evening."

"'T is not so late," said the widow dryly, glancing at the tall clock in the corner, "but that you may yet be there by the time they begin."

"Oh, no, not — er — now, of course. I was only in fear lest perhaps the absence of both of us upon such an occasion might be remarked."

"And what if it be?"

"Mm-m?"

"What if it be, I say?"

"Why — er — nothing; no harm, no actual wrong; but — but yet," — he sandwiched in a little official cough used with great effect upon erring brethren,— "I think it always better not to give occasion for censure."

"I hope never to see the time," returned the widow with the fortified air of one intrenched behind all the beatitudes, "when the fear of censure will restrain me from doing aught my judgment approves."

The Elder, whether from habit or defective hearing, resorted again to his interrogative hum.

"Such idle censure has no terrors for me," repeated the widow in precisely her former tone, thereby implying some scepticism as to her visitor's infirmity.

"Were you — er — to — to read what Ames says of Callings," urged the Elder, tugging confusedly at one of his pockets, "or the advice given touching the bearing of Elders and others in authority, by the late Dr. Smithers —"

"I have no need, that I know of, to read what anybody says on that topic; the guidance of Holy Writ—"

"Ye-es, yes, to be sure, when it comes to that, if one could always find the precise point covered—Let me—I—er—crave pardon 'tis nothing more worthy acceptance—"

The Elder interrupted himself to offer a couple of large oranges which he had with great difficulty extracted from a rather small pocket.

"Most obliged, I am sure. You are kind to think of me; they look very choice," said the widow, without effusiveness; accepting the fruit in a matter-of-course way and placing it on the table.

The Elder, with a suppressed sigh of relief at having accomplished a necessary preliminary, rubbed his withered hands and held them toward the hearth, not as suffering from cold, but in mechanical recognition of the fire.

The widow evidently felt the ensuing silence a little awkward, for she threw in as a palpable makeshift the remark,—

"There seems good prospect of clear weather to-morrow."

The Elder did not hear, or hearing did not heed. Nursing his thin legs and nervously writhing on his chair, he was in travail with his purpose, and presently broke forth:—

"My—er—intent, Sister Ruck, in waiting upon you this evening, is—er—to renew the topic broached upon the occasion of my last visit and—"

He paused and waited while the widow with great deliberation took up a fallen stitch.

"And — er — to bring it to some satisfactory conclusion."

As if to give opportunity for any possible objection, the Elder here took time for a series of coughs of no particular character.

"On many points, and those, as I — er — understand, of greatest import, we are already agreed — "

Fearing perhaps that silence might involve undue concession, and with the evident intent of keeping the conversation within easy control, the widow interposed.

"I doubt if it be safe to take so much for granted."

"Mm-m?"

"'T were best in so grave a matter not to jump at conclusions."

"Why — er — I — assuredly I am justified in thinking that on personal grounds there are — er — no objections — "

The widow began to clear her throat with an ominous sound, and he stopped.

"I know not what warrant I have ever given for such a surmise," she said dryly.

The Elder coughed toilfully through the whole gamut of doubt and deprecation before nerving himself to reply: —

"'Tis not so much what you have said as what you have *not*. Actions in — in — er — such business speak louder than words."

"And what action, pray you, of mine — "

"None — er — nothing; I meant not — er — everything has been most proper and discreet — "

The widow sat back in her chair with the tightened reins of conversation once more well in hand.

"But," pursued the Elder, carefully noting the effect of every word, "have you not received my visits now for — er — several years — "

"And if I have?"

"I may fairly be justified, 't would seem, in supposing you have — er — some small esteem for me."

"It is not to be denied."

"Am I, then, left to infer that there are, notwithstanding," — the Elder here indulged in quite a spasm of coughing, — "er — personal objections — er — "

"As I remember," answered the widow, collectedly, "I have not committed myself upon that point."

"It would be a great step forward if I could know upon what ground these objections — "

It will be noted that the Elder had a timid way of leaving significant sentences unfinished, and that his ellipses had generally an interrogative value. The widow did not shrink from the climax toward which the discussion had been steadily drifting.

"There is the matter of your health," she said quietly.

The Elder looked at once relieved and irritated.

"Oh — humph!" he began hastily, and then with second-thought prudence paused to study the form of his answer. "Well, we are neither of us — craving your pardon — any longer in the first vigor of youth, I suppose; but for general health and activity," — he straightened himself unconsciously in his chair, — "I am — er — as well off, I trust, as most men turned sixty."

"There was your attack of rheumatism last autumn," said the widow, with her former directness.

"Gone — all gone!" he replied, kicking his legs out one after the other as if in proof.

"And your asthma — "

"Better; have n't been so free of it for years as I am this minute."

The widow knit several rounds in silence, and the Elder began to look encouraged; the event showed that he was premature.

"In so grave a matter as this in hand, Brother Hawkins," she resumed presently, loosening the tension of the yarn from the feeding-ball in her pocket, and showing for the first time a little touch of constraint in her manner, "it is as well to be outspoken."

"Assuredly," he answered, with a look of suspense.

"It is not unfit, then, that I should mention certain domestic habits which, though they concern me now not at all, might, in the closer relationship you have done me the honor to propose, prove highly objectionable."

The air of calm invulnerability to counter-attack with which this was said, for a moment nettled the hearer.

"Our Heavenly Father hath made us all of the dust of the earth, unto which in a brief time we must return," he began with an overdone air of humility. "We are born in sin and with an inheritance of transgression. I am but a poor toiler in the vineyard, who, though I had but one talent intrusted to me, have yet sought to put it at usury. I have humbly tried, after my poor fashion, to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Master; and though I have achieved so little, I yet hope He at least out of His abundant mercy will

pardon my shortcomings, and accept me with all the sum of my imperfections — many though they be — upon my head."

No little taken aback by this dexterous rebuke, the widow rubbed her nose with a look of discomfiture, and hesitated.

"These charges you have to make —" prompted the Elder.

"I have been told you use tobacco," she said, reddening slightly.

"It is true," he answered, with a cough of self-justification, "I occasionally smoke a pipe."

"There has never been any smoking in my house; it seems to me an abominable and filthy habit."

"I have found it a great solace in trouble or perplexity; but," continued the Elder, meekly, "I trust I am not so wedded to that or any other weakness of the flesh but that with Divine aid I may overcome it."

In her woman's ignorance of the cost of the purposed sacrifice, the widow received this promise of reform with an indifference almost brutal.

"I pray you go on and finish the story of my shortcomings."

"It is said," pursued the widow, nothing daunted by the touch of irony in the last suggestion, "that you are most remiss in the matter of your meals."

The Elder looked puzzled.

"This, I am aware, is not to be ranked in importance with moral defects, but there is no more grievous drawback to the comfort and peace of a household."

Quite at a loss what to say to so novel a charge, the Elder coughed with indefinable expression.

"There is only one time to eat a meal," pursued the widow with the absolutism of the model housewife, "and that is, when it is ready. I could never abide that a person should come dawdling to my table a half-hour behind time."

"This trait," said the Elder, a little bewildered at the emphasis bestowed upon the matter, "has never before, I think, been presented to my notice in the light of a misdemeanor. Perhaps," he added, with a flickering attempt at a smile, "the habit might be trusted to correct itself with such company at the board."

The widow received this feeble attempt at playfulness with grave disapproval. "The matter," she said, "is of importance enough in my eyes to be made the subject of a distinct promise."

"As you will," sighed the Elder, resignedly; "I will pledge myself to endeavor to meet your approval in that regard."

There followed a pause, during which the widow played out yarn from her pocket and the Elder sat nursing his legs in strained suspense.

"Pray you go on," he said at last in a tone suggestive of moral constraint. "What other and more heinous fault is reserved to close the catalogue?"

"I think of nothing else," said the widow, after a whole minute of thoughtful silence.

"'Nothing'!" echoed the Elder with an irrepressible sigh of relief. "Why, then the way would seem to

be clearing, and I am gladdened with the thought that I may go forth to-night with your promise."

He drew up his chair in a little flustered way, and seized in his own the hands of the widow, who, with a conscious look and heightened color, suffered the endearment. In this attitude they were disturbed by the sound of a heavy footstep in the hall. The widow released herself and stepped promptly to the door.

A glance reassured her. It was only the Collector, whom one of the housemaids was ushering into the room across the hall. The light fell full upon his snowy tie-wig and puce-colored coat as he passed the candle. His back being turned, their eyes did not meet, and there was no occasion for greeting. The widow, therefore, carefully shut the door and went back to the Elder.

"Having settled so happily the personal objections," began the latter with a vague effort to resume their former posture, which was ignored by the widow, "it would seem there could be no further difficulty."

As this sanguine proposition was received in utter silence, his forehead slowly settled back into the old creases of anxiety.

"Surely there can be no doubt but that in a worldly way the interests of both would be furthered by our union?" he resumed, prudently finishing the sentence with an interrogative inflection.

"I am not prepared to say that it has yet become so clear to me," was the conservative answer.

"I should offer no objection to your reserving to your own use the whole income of your personal estate."

The widow did not look impressed with this concession.

"Although it is unusual —" the Elder was beginning again, when the widow, with a little air of impatience, interposed: —

"The small sum of my worldly goods must needs be settled upon me wholly and unconditionally before I advance a step in the business."

"Ahem!" exclaimed the Elder, with a cough of dismay; "it is an unheard-of thing."

"As you will; there is no constraint upon us to go on in the matter."

"But," urged the Elder, ignoring the alternative suggested, "have you reflected I shall be responsible for your debts?"

The widow smiled grimly. "You are not like to be crushed under the burden."

"And — er — liable for your support?"

"With my own means in hand I can supply my own necessities."

"You will not be bound in law to do so."

"Neither, I trust, do I need binding to do my duty."

"The law has, however, been established for a wise purpose, that the husband, being the head of the house and responsible for all taxes, debts, and burdens, should have control of the necessary means."

"Keep control of what is yours, with all my heart, but expect not ever to gain control of mine!"

"Yet, has it occurred to you that the law endows you with a third part of my estate on the day we are married?"

"An advantage which I will cheerfully forego," interrupted the widow with a promptness which suggested that the sacrifice demanded of her would not be immense.

"Are you well advised in what you are saying?"

"If I be not, I can but take the consequences."

The Elder rose, and walked up and down with a discomfited air.

"There is yet one point," he said hesitatingly, "upon which I would we might come to some agreement."

His hostess, silently knitting, did not help him out by a word or look of interest.

"There is your pasture at Muddy River —"

A sudden little gleam of intelligence lurked for a moment about the widow's eyes but was promptly repressed.

"It adjoins mine, as you remember, and being so far from the rest of your land, it can be of no great value to your estate —"

"On the contrary," broke in the widow, promptly, "I have had divers offers for it, and consider it a valuable tract. I cannot say, however, if so be you feel disposed to yield a point in return, but that I might be prevailed upon."

"Why," remarked the Elder, warily, "any reasonable point which lay lawfully in my power and was no more than a fair equivalent —"

"'T is a small matter, and perhaps you already have it in contemplation as a necessary part of your establishment, — I mean the keeping a carriage."

The Elder was overtaken with such a vigorous attack of coughing that he could not at once answer.

"I am called to do much in the service of the congregation," pursued the widow, "and that oftentimes when the roads are in bad condition; and you also would find it of great convenience in going to neighboring towns."

"'T is a grievous expense — setting up a carriage," said the Elder, shaking his head doubtfully; "and there is constant risk involved. In my humble judgment, hiring horses at need is by far the better way for folks in our condition."

The widow pursued the subject no further; whereat the Elder became very uncomfortable, and after exhausting all the arguments in favor of his own view, he suddenly asked, —

"Is your mind then so stubbornly fixed upon this extravagance?"

"If there be any question of stubbornness, it must lie with you," said the widow, calmly. "The carriage is demanded in return for the land; if you do not insist upon the land, there need be no further talk of a carriage."

The Elder sat for some time in silence, fitting the finger-tips of his right hand against those of the left, and looking over the bony pyramid into the fire.

"Although there is much doubt in my mind if these be fair and just equivalents," he said at last, mildly, "yet, as I would have the business despatched to-night, I yield the point of the carriage in exchange for the land."

"Let it be so stipulated in the settlement!" said the widow, cautiously.

"It shall. And now is there any other matter upon which we are not agreed?"

"It is understood," said the widow, "that I am never to be asked to move from this house, and that Mercy is always to have a home with me?"

"That is already settled."

"I know of nothing else."

"Then are we agreed?"

"I see nothing against it."

"Let us pray!" cried the Elder, rising with an air of precipitation and extending his hand to the widow.

Scarcely had the prayer ended, when the door was suddenly thrown open and Agnes appeared on the threshold. She was dressed in a long gray cloak and a red hood, which falling back from her head showed her face ashen pale and her eyes shining with feverish brilliancy. She came forward holding out a piece of paper.

"If a man — if somebody comes to ask for me while I am out, give him this!"

Too deeply absorbed with the crisis in her own affairs to remark the disturbance in the lodger's look, the widow mechanically thrust the paper in her pocket and thought no more of the matter.

Next morning she was told that a rough-looking man was asking for Agnes at the door, and was presently startled by the further announcement that the lodger was not in her room, had not slept in her bed, and could not be found. She hurried instantly to the door with the note in her hand.

"Is this for you?" she asked, extending the paper.

"Oi 'm thinkin' not!"

"Is your name Redden?"

"Ay, is it."

"Did you expect a message from Agnes — from Miss Surriage?"

"No; oi wor n't expectin' no message; oi wor expectin' hersel'," retorted Job, suspiciously.

"She is not here!" said the widow, with growing consternation.

"Wher' be she, then?" he demanded savagely.

"I know nothing about it. She was not at home last night; she said nothing of staying out; she has never done the like before. I fear," concluded the widow, losing her habitual control, "something has happened to her."

"'F ther's onythin' ill hoppened her," said Job, threateningly, "'t 'll go bod wi' ye all!"

"The paper!" cried the widow, with sudden relief, — "the paper — read it! It may explain!"

"It 's no good to me," he said, shaking his head sullenly. "Read it you!"

The widow opened the hastily scribbled note and turned pale as she read: —

DEAR JOB, — I have served you ill turns before, but this is the worst. I have gon away. Take no more heed of me, — I am not worth your pains. But mind this, — remember what I say, — *'t is my own folt; let noboddy blaim him!* One word more. O Job, for the sake of the old days, — of the times when we were children, — spare me your curses! That is all. God bless you! Forget I ever lived, and never, never again speak the name of

AGNES SURRIAGE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COUNTING THE COST.

SIDE by side on Garden Court Street stood two of the stateliest mansions in the town, — one, the ill-fated dwelling of Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson; the other, bordering upon Bell Alley, the scarcely less noted house of Charles Henry Frankland.

The well-known cut in the histories, taken from a painted panel which once adorned the interior, shows the outside of the Collector's house to have been bald and plain to severity. This, however, was but an architectural mask, — a Puritanical cloak, as it were, covering the swashing bravery of a Royalist and courtier. In effect, it was an unconscious concession of the new dispensation to the old theocratic spirit fast passing away. For behind this cold and forbidding façade was hidden a sumptuous interior, of which we have alluring details. The vast hall running through the midst, the old staircase leading off, so broad and easy of ascent that Frankland used to ride his pony up and down, the splendid decoration of the lower rooms with their wainscoted walls illuminated by painted panels, the mantel-pieces of wrought Italian marble, surmounting hearths laid

in painted tiles of finest porcelain, the tessellated floors composed of hundreds of rarest woods, the fluted and richly carved columns supporting the ceiling, the gilded pilasters and cornices, the buffet groaning with massive plate, the cellar stocked with choicest wines, — these are some of the sounding phrases in the description of this old-time mansion, which yet a latter-day citizen would find wanting in the prime necessaries of life; for in all the sum of its appointments there is no mention of a furnace, a gas-pipe, a bath-room, or an ice-chest. In view of all this, it is pathetic to reflect that the eighteenth century plumed itself upon its civilization.

Like a body reft of its soul, Agnes sat amid the splendor of her new home. She passed the time in wandering aimlessly from room to room and staring blankly out of the windows. Life, as it were, passed on and around her without touching her at any point. She seemed waiting for the world to go by and leave her alone. Withal she made no show of grief other than sitting day in and day out wearing the withdrawn, brooding look which haunts the faces of certain antique statues.

Frankland was deeply concerned. This mood of Agnes was quite out of the range of his experience. He studied her face and watched her every movement with ceaseless solicitude but increasing perplexity. At times, his own invention at fault, he appealed in despair to Agnes herself.

"What is it ails you? Be a good girl, now, and tell me! If it were grief you would weep, but I never find you in tears. If it were anger you would

vent reproaches on me. If it were aversion — but no, I will not yet believe — Tell me, Agnes, that I am not hateful to you!"

For all answer, she simply put her hand in his.

"Why then, dear creature, what is it keeps you in this woful state?"

She raised her eyes to his with a look so expressive of the futility of explanation to one who needed to ask it, — a look, too, which had so unmistakable a touch of profound pity for the querist, that Frankland was much discomfited. Perhaps that look suddenly revealed to him a certain remoteness in their spiritual states which forbade entire fellowship.

"My dear," he broke out a few days after at the breakfast-table, "I cannot bear to see you in this way. I have made up my mind to send for the doctor out of hand."

Agnes looked at him vacantly a moment, when, as if the sense of his words had just reached her, she cried out with great earnestness, —

"Do not! oh, do not, I beg!"

"Yet something must be done; you will listen to nothing I advise."

"But I am quite well," she pleaded, rubbing her hands and straightening herself in the chair as if in proof.

"On the contrary, I am convinced you are very ill."

"Oh, no! I assure you, I have no pain."

"You are as white as chalk."

"'T is nothing."

"And do not eat enough to keep a sparrow alive."

"But if 'tis all I need —"

"'T is not; look at your plate now."

She gazed blankly at her untouched breakfast, saying in a tone of constraint, as she rose from the table, —

"I am not hungry now; I will eat by and by."

"So you say every day, but the 'by and by' never comes, and you grow more pale and ill all the time. What can I do? I search the shops and markets through in quest of tidbits, but you will have none of them."

Agnes looked troubled.

"Look yonder, my dear," he said, putting his arm about her as they moved away from the table; "there lie the flowers I fetched you last night, all withered because you cared not enough to put them in water."

"I — I pray you forgive me!"

She gathered up the faded flowers with a look of remorse.

"Poh! poh! 'tis no matter. You shall have fresh ones to-day. 'T is not of the flowers I think; 'tis that you're no longer yourself. You look like one distraught. You stare at me when I speak, you heed not what I say. You even forget that I am with you, and care not at all for my great anxiety on account of the state you are in."

Startled, as it seemed, by this accusing tone, and moved perhaps by the gravity and earnestness of his look, on a sudden impulse Agnes threw her arms about his neck and hid her face in his bosom.

"There — so; you are yourself again," stroking her head tenderly. "And now are you willing to go to a little trouble to please me?"

"God forbid I should shrink from any pains to oblige you!"

"Hark you, then! I will go to the office and despatch what there may be of moment, and make haste back again. At ten o'clock I will have the horses at the door, and —"

"No, no!" starting up with a look of consternation, — "not that! I am not able — I cannot go out."

"Ah, but that's the trouble. You will not do the one thing will cure you. 'T is the lack of fresh air is all the matter."

She closed her eyes wearedly, with the former look of resignation to hopeless misunderstanding on her averted face, and made no answer.

"Come, now, dear, listen to me, and —"

"Nay, do not press me in this matter!"

"But," he began, with persistency.

She shook her head with so harassed an air that he desisted. He stood toying with his ruffles for a few moments, with a look of vexation, and then, heaving a little sigh of disappointment, went off to the Custom House.

He came home as usual to a mid-day dinner, and went flying upstairs with an air of great bustle and excitement, where he found Agnes seated at her chamber-window, still wearing her morning toilet, and holding in her hand the withered flowers.

"Great news — there is great news, girl!" he

shouted, with his eyes ablaze. "The town is agog. The heroes of Louisbourg are come back! They were sighted outside two hours and more ago, and by this are come to anchor in the harbor. They will be received this very afternoon, and never was seen such a bustle of preparation; 't will be the greatest sight ever known in Boston. Hurrah, my dear! Try now and join me in a little cheer, and see how 't will stir your blood! Aha! I think I detect a very, very faint little tinge creeping back to its old home here!" playfully patting her cheeks.

What with the suddenness of his entrance and the enthusiasm of his manner, Agnes did indeed flush with contagious excitement.

"But what is here? Fie! Still wearing your breakfast-gown? Come, now, make haste and call your maid. Do you see the hour? Dinner will be dished before you are in order."

Frankland was so full of the news that he could talk of nothing else at dinner, or so he would have it appear.

"You remember Warren, of course," he went on, as they rose from the table. "'T is my old friend, the Commodore. I have often told you of him. He has covered himself with glory, and there is talk of knighting him, and Pepperell as well. Pepperell is with him, you know. The two will be received together, and with equal honor; there was never anything like it! You shall go with me to see the parade," — with a sidelong glance at her,—"the carriage will be here directly. Every mother's son in town will be there. Egad! we will have Warren to stay with

us! Dear old Peter! How rejoiced I shall be to embrace a genuine British tar still smelling of gunpowder. Ah, it quite turns my head! Hush! there go the guns; they are moving up the harbor; the shipping is firing salutes! Quick, fly and get on your bonnet! Here comes the carriage!"

Agnes stood looking at the floor with an irresolute and troubled air.

"Now, my dear girl, do not object—"

She put up her hand as if to speak, but he would not suffer her.

"No," he went on, imperatively, "I will listen to you when we get back. Come, Agnes," with sudden seriousness, "you will pain me very much if you refuse!"

There was a show of yielding in her face.

"What should you dread? I shall be with you; I will not quit your side for a moment—"

"I will go!" she said suddenly.

"Bravo! There's my old Agnes; this is a great day. Hark! There go the guns from the Castle! Quick! quick, my love! let us be there before they make the landing!"

Once seated in the carriage they drove straight to King's Street, and took their place in the throng of vehicles which blocked every approach to that chief thoroughfare of the town.

True enough, as the Collector said, Boston had known few such opportunities for a pageant. Nature, too, conspired to the success of the occasion by making that 1st of June a radiant day. The whole populace came forth to celebrate their first great

military achievement, now renowned through all the world.

Amid the roar of guns, the clangor of bells, and the shouts of the people, Agnes sat unmoved, gazing upon the general tumult as upon some mad and meaningless raving.

Not so Frankland; his blood was fired. "See, see!" he cried, standing up in the carriage; "yonder is the 'Chester' with the blue banner. Warren is Commodore of the Blue, you know. Did you ever see a British man-of-war? Look, then; you never saw the like of that before! Hark! What 's all the drumming? Ah, the Boston regiment. Here they come! This is their training-day; they 've been drilling all the morning on the Common. Egad! but they march well, too. What now? Ay, ay! I see; drawing up in two lines to let the procession pass through. That shouting must be for the Governor. Sure enough; here come the Cadets! That 's Captain Pollard in front. Worthy Ben looks like Falstaff in that toggery. Here 's Shirley at last; his Excellency's wig is something awry; but a hero can afford to be careless of his harness. Look at those solemn stalkers at the Governor's heels! 'T is the worshipful Council, and next behind come the honorable representatives; they 're all on the march down to Long Wharf to help Warren and Pepperell ashore."

While waiting for the procession to return, the people naturally occupied themselves with one another. So fine an equipage as the Collector's did not escape notice. Many a curious eye was turned upon

the grand coach in which Agnes sat pale, silent, and consciously shrinking.

Her retirement was destined to be rudely invaded. They were suddenly hailed by an assertive personage from the crowd.

"Hello, I say, Frankland! well met, I vow! Never was sight of faithful vestryman more opportune to a distressed rector. Here have I been for half an hour trampled under the heels of this unmannerly mob, little dreaming of your presence."

"Come in! Come in! Here is plenty of room," opening the coach door. "Mr. Price, my dear!"

Agnes started and turned red and pale by turns as the bustling clergyman promptly accepted the invitation and climbed up to the seat by her side.

"Good-day to you, Miss Surriage. I am glad to be of your company. Ah, this is a blissful relief, I assure you!" settling his ample person among the comfortable cushions. "I hope I may not discommode you."

Agnes muttered a confused disclaimer, which was lost in the bustle.

"'T is a rare day and a great occasion," went on the parson. "Yes, there 's nothing that brings out your vulgar and your gentle, and reduces all for the nonce to a common level of humanity, like the war-fever, — love of the vain bubble glory, and all that. Frankland, you 're as bad as the rest. I 've been watching you; not a whit more conservative than the rabble. As for me, if you ask my business, why, forsooth, I 'm making parochial calls."

The Collector laughed. "No, I 'm one of them

to-day, and I let it come out. I 've a right to a little enthusiasm, too, for Warren is an old crony of mine; I am come to swell his triumph. You yourself would like friend Peter; he 's much after your pattern. I 'll have you to meet him, if Shirley swallows him not bodily."

"So do; count on me! Nothing would suit me better than such a bout; and afterwards you shall bring him down to my new place at Hopkinton."

"What, yonder in the wilderness where 't is said you are striving to transplant the Church of England?"

"And have transplanted it. Come down and see my new chapel! 'T is already consecrated, and endowed, too, with a fine glebe. For myself, I have a comfortable little box just across the way, with an estate half as big as an Irish county, all picked up for a mere song."

"What signifies the size, if it 's all forest?"

"But it 's not; 't is a fine, fertile country, a virgin soil —"

"Oh, never a doubt."

"With views not to be matched, brooks swarming with trout —"

"Eh?"

"Upon my word!"

"Why, now you are talking to the point."

"And such shooting as I have not met in the country."

"You would make us believe it a paradise."

"Why, so it is, — of peace and quiet and all rational enjoyment. If now I can but get that nig-

gardly London Society or my very cautious Lord Bishop to endow my infant church, and if, also, I can procure you and a few other Christian souls to go thither, we might realize poor Berkeley's dream of a model community."

"But what chance for the poor laity, now that the church has laid its mortmain grasp on all the land?"

"Bless my heart, sir, there 's land enough for all creation! Come down and see, and I 'll pledge my word you 'll return owner of a fine plantation, and honor my name and memory for putting it in your way. Come, what do you say?"

"I will bind myself by no promises."

"You shall at least bind yourself by a promise to visit us, and you shall bring Miss Surriage too. My dear madam," turning suddenly to Agnes, "we shall be glad to see you as well. We may then get better acquainted. As it is, I see you but once in a dog's age. Where do you keep hid so closely? Are you still lodging with the old Puritan duenna of Tileston Street?"

Agnes, seized with panic, looked helplessly at Frankland. Happily his ingenuity was not put to the test, for a tremendous salvo of artillery announced that the heroes had landed, and directly the air was filled with uproar.

Amid the booming of cannon, volleys of musketry, clanging of bells, and the hoarse cheering of the multitude, the martial Governor led the brace of heroes to the Town House, where, in speeches which should be framed in gold and hung up within those time-honored walls as eternal models of brevity for

maundering posterity, they received the honors showered upon them.

"I am obliged to this Honorable House," said the gallant tar, "for the great respect they have shown me. They may depend on my zeal and service while I live for the colonies in general and this province in particular."

"I," quoth in turn "the great man of Kittery," "am heartily obliged to the Honorable House for the respect they have shown me, and I shall be always ready to risk my life and fortune for the good of my dear native country."

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRIAL AND VERDICT.

AFTER her experience at the Warren and Pepperell reception, it will be no matter of wonder that Agnes shut herself up closer than ever. No inducement, indeed, could tempt her to cross her own threshold, nor would she see any of the numerous guests who frequented the house. Frankland pleaded with her in vain. She sometimes, it would seem, grew wearied of his remonstrances.

"But you are losing your beauty, my darling."

She made a movement of impatience.

"And your health, too, will soon be impaired under such treatment."

"What matter if it be?"

"Vital matter; for life is worth nothing without it."

"'Tis all one to me."

"Fie, fie! lay aside that tone! The whole trouble lies in a nutshell: this jail-bird life robs you of your spirits. With your cheer, away flies your appetite; and all is founded upon your perverseness in preferring imprisonment to liberty. I must needs chide you for such unreasonableness."

He spoke with such an air of conviction that Agnes sighed as if in despair of finding any other answer.

"Come, then, let me help you drive away these vapors! Come out into the sunshine, and see the flowers, and hear the birds sing! They will bring back your old self."

"Can they bring back"—she checked her outburst of bitterness, and concluded with self-control—"the past?"

"And would you in truth bring back the past?"

She shook her head drearily.

"Were you happier then? Would you go back to Tileston Street and leave me?"

She drew nearer him with a half shudder, but did not answer.

"Why, then, darling, cannot you be happy? Go about as you used to do. I will go with you. I will not quit your side. I will protect you from impertinence."

"Even though you were to protect me from the judgment and censure of my neighbors and townsmen—"

"I will, I can. No one shall address you of whose respect and demeanor I am not assured."

"There is still one against whom all your powers cannot avail."

"Divine Mercy—"

"Hush, hush! I dare not think— Do not speak of that!"

"What then—whom else do you dread?"

"Myself."

"'T is because you shut me out of your heart. You will not tell me your thoughts. Believe me, dearest creature, if you will but confide in me, I will find a way to protect you even from yourself."

"Oh, nothing, — nothing can ever do that now!" starting up with a sudden air of wildness, with hands pressed to her bosom.

"There, there!" folding his arms about her tenderly. "How can we ever hope to cure this trouble while you are forever brooding upon it? Let 's think of something else. Come, now, go off with me for a walk into the fields; out on the hills; in the wildwood, where we can get away from this pest of humanity and into companionship of Nature."

"Nature is for those whose minds and hearts are in tune with her; she will hold no companionship with such as I."

"Fudge and faddle! Come, now, I shall get downright angry with you. I will hear no more such stuff. You shut your ears to reason; you heed nothing I say. Upon my word, at times I think you care for me no longer."

She looked disturbed at his unusual sharpness of tone. He went on, laboriously working up his fit of indignation: —

"'T is no matter what pitch of anxiety I am in, you heed it not a jot. I am persuaded you do not care. I never thought you could be so selfish. You shut me out of your heart and life. You live as much alone as a hermit, moping and brooding over your own thoughts, — and most unwholesome ones at that. Thus wrapped up in yourself, you have not a care to waste upon my unhappy state."

"Do you, indeed, think this?" with a look of pain.

"Have I not warrant enough?"

She looked at him intently, suspecting a want of sincerity in his petulance.

"Agnes," he went on, dropping his pretence as if ashamed of it, "we two stand, as it were, against the world. We should be all in all to each other. What need we care whether others approve our course? Our duty is to be faithful to each other. Speak the word, and we will go away from here. If there be aught lacking to your happiness, tell me. I will get you anything the world affords."

"Go, get me back my innocence!" she cried with a sudden outburst, and hurried from the room.

Shocked at this violent reproach, — the first that had passed her lips, — Frankland sat brooding over it for hours. Late at night, when the footsteps had died away in the streets, and the wax-lights burned low in the sconces, there was a rustle of silk behind him, and Agnes flung herself down beside his chair.

"Forgive my frantic words! I was beside myself. Have patience with me, Frankland; pity me! At times it seems my wits are wanting, and I act like a child."

If, as was natural, Frankland hoped for any good results from this incident, he was doomed to disappointment. It needed only another experience of different sort but similar significance to convince him he had yet little cause for congratulation.

Smybert, after a wearisome delay, at last sent home the portrait. It was done in his well-known style and at its best. Indeed, honest John would seem to have been a little inspired by his subject, for

the painting, although it showed no very high or subtle qualities, had a captivating vitality.

Frankland was more than satisfied, — he was delighted. Thinking to give the original a pleasant surprise, he blindfolded and brought her up to it as it hung over the fireplace in the drawing-room.

She uttered a cry as if hurt, and recoiled violently. That fair, smiling face, triumphant in its beauty and securely happy in its new-pledged love, was a terrible reminder. She insisted upon its removal; and, indeed, the very thought of its presence in the house was so obnoxious that the discomfited Collector took it away to his office.

Meantime other influences intervened to effect what entreaty, expostulation, and reproach had in vain attempted.

Frankland came home one evening with a grave face, and sat for a long time studying his patient as if hesitating to say what he had in mind. Concluding, perhaps, that the case could not be worse, and that the experiment was worth trying, he ventured at length: —

"I have bad news for you, my dear!"

She regarded him with the look — void of either curiosity or concern — of one who had passed beyond the reach of human emotions.

He handed her a copy of the "Evening Post," with his thumb on the following item: —

"Last Night, died at *Dorchester*, greatly lamented, after a few days' Illness, the Lady of His Excellency Our Governor."

Staring at the passage as if it conveyed no meaning to her mind, Agnes let the paper fall upon the table without comment.

After waiting for a space, Frankland said in protest against such indifference, —

"Poor Shirley! 't will be a sad blow to him. She was a fine woman. She was a faithful wife to him. She has been a faithful friend to both of us, my dear!"

Without a word of assent, or the least evidence of interest, Agnes rose and walked away. An hour afterwards Frankland found her sitting upstairs in the gloom, her face wet with tears.

"Why, Agnes," he said, taking her in his arms impulsively, "I wondered you did not care."

Directly she burst into a fit of weeping. A most prolonged and uncontrollable fit it proved. The dam once broken down, the whole flood swept over.

Although somewhat haggard and jaded, she rose next morning in a frame of mind which the anxious Collector recognized as in some measure a return of her natural self.

Of her own accord she expressed a wish for a suit of mourning that she might go to the funeral.

Only too gladly Frankland assented to a purpose so entirely in accord with his own wish; and accordingly on the day of the funeral their coach took its place in the mourning cavalcade, in company with "the Honourable his Majesty's Council and House of Representatives, and a vast Number of the principal Gentry of both Sexes of this and the Neighbouring Towns." The "Post" in its issue next day described the funeral at length: —

"During the Procession, which began at Three O'clock, P. M., the Guns at Castle William and the Town Batteries fired every half Minute, as did also those on board his Majesty's Ships, Chester, Henchingbrook, Massachusetts, and Boston Packet. The Corps being carried into the King's Chapel, the Rev. M^r^ Commissary Price preached a sermon very suitable to the mournful occasion from Rev. xiv. 13: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'"

Next Sunday there was a profound sensation at King's Chapel when Frankland handed Agnes up the aisle to the head of his own pew. Her face, refined by traces of suffering, its clear pallor set off by her mourning garments, never had the effect of her beauty been more marked or irresistible. Not the widowed Governor in the pew of State, surrounded by his orphaned children, was an object of more universal attention.

Agnes alone was oblivious of the notice bestowed upon her; with devout face and unaffected piety she sat through the service in rapt attention to its purpose and meaning.

As the congregation rose to disperse, the two found themselves surrounded and jostled in the crowded aisles by friends and acquaintances. It proved a terrible moment. Agnes had plainly not realized that she was coming to her trial. The place, the relative attitude of the parties, — everything tended to emphasize the ordeal. Public opinion pronounced its verdict, while it held the culprits in durance. That verdict, a silent thunderbolt, fell with swift

and crushing force. No throng in Roman amphitheatre ever turned down their thumbs in more merciless accord than these good pious Christians met under a consecrated roof and fresh risen from bowed adoration of One who in his large and tender charity said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

For a space Agnes was overwhelmed. She shook violently; her strength failed. In the delirious whirl of the senses which precedes loss of consciousness, she suddenly felt Frankland's arm upholding and supporting her. It was an Ithuriel touch. By a supreme effort she regained self-control. No longer heeding the disdainful looks of those about her, clinging fast to him, with her pallid face upturned to his in love and confidence, she made her slow way out of church. She had chosen one against the world,—one who, however much he had wronged her, had yet in the hour of trial stood stanchly up to shield her against the deadly scorn of her kind.

CHAPTER XXV.

A BARONET.

NEXT day Agnes fell ill, and for the first time in her life. Hitherto, perfect health had crowned her as with an aureola. She was like a wild bird shut in a cage, and proved a most intractable invalid. Frankland was in sore straits how to manage her. She would not be coddled, stubbornly refused all pills and possets, and became violent at the mention of a doctor.

Happily it was a case which could safely be left to Nature, — a quotidian fever, which while it wasted her flesh, blanched her skin, and weighed down her limbs with lassitude, yet made no alarming inroad upon her vitality. To confirm her constant statement that she was quite well, she must needs be up and dressed every day despite all protests, creeping languidly about the house and curling herself up in the sunny window-seats after her old habit at the Widow Ruck's.

It was noteworthy that her mind seemed to regain tone as her body lost it. This cropped out gradually and in little things, — straws upon the current; she began to act as if at home, to assume the tone of a mistress to the servants and slaves, — in short, to treat her surroundings as belongings.

A corresponding change of mental attitude toward the outer world presently became apparent. Frankland discovered it with equal surprise and delight; but, as most clearly a policy deliberately adopted upon conviction, which in its turn was as evidently the fruit of mature thought, it warned him of unsuspected reserves still existing between them.

One evening he was late in getting home. Having crept down to meet him, she threw herself upon a sofa in the parlor to wait upon his tardiness. Coming in presently, he stopped on the threshold and stared, no doubt at the very pretty picture she made, what with her careless attitude, her black hair falling softly about her pallid face, all emphasized by admirable details of a pale blue robe and white quilted petticoat against the yellow damask of the sofa.

A glad look overspread her face, more significant than a smile. He sat down to tell her the gossip of the day, when directly they were interrupted by a loud knock at the street-door.

Frankland turned to warn the servant who passed through the hall.

"He knows," said Agnes, anticipating the movement; "he has orders to admit no one at this hour."

Listening idly they heard the man, faithful to his orders, deny the visitor admission, when directly an imperative voice was heard to say: —

"But I won't be sent away; I hear Miss Surriage is ill. Go say to your master 't is his pastor, the Reverend Mr. Price."

A firm step was heard the next minute in the hall. Frankland turned quickly to shut the door, but before he could interpose, the Commissary entered the room.

"Ah, here you are within ear-shot," he went on without embarrassment; "so you heard me running the guard —"

Frankland looked anxiously at Agnes, fearful of the effect of this intrusion. He must have marvelled at her absolute composure. Reassured, he turned to the visitor with outstretched hand.

"You deserve a welcome for your boldness in forcing an entrance; the man had orders to admit nobody, on account of —"

"Miss Surriage. Yes, I heard she was ill. 'T was on her account I came," turning and shaking hands cordially with Agnes.

Frankland was amazed, and at a loss, too, what to think. Well as he knew his pastor, it would have been impossible to say from his manner whether he was so engrossed with the approaching crisis in his own affairs as to see nothing unusual in Agnes's presence in the house, or whether, having heard of the scene at the Chapel, he had come promptly to emphasize his disapproval of the behavior of his flock. It is significant of Frankland's estimate of the clergyman that he should have found these theories equally consistent with his character.

The Commissary's next speech dispelled all doubt as to his thought and feeling in the matter. It was unfortunate that his manner suffered a falling off from the high level of his motive.

"I 'm sorry to see you in this case, madam, but

hope by finding you downstairs that you 're on the mend already. I feared you might lack attention from outside friends in your — in the — that is, under the circumstances."

Agnes's reception of this overture was interesting. Without embarrassment, without a trace of pride or resentment, she listened and replied. Partly by her calmness, — the calmness of one withdrawn upon a plane beyond the reach of the world's approval or censure, — and partly by a subtler suggestion of something in her manner which Frankland puzzled his brain vainly to analyze, she effectively rejected the too apparent condescension of her visitor and left him disconcerted.

All this by her manner; her words were commonplace enough: —

"My thanks, sir; but I have suffered yet no lack of attention."

"Ah, so! I 'm glad to hear it; 't is plain, too, you 're not in danger, or you 'd hardly be here."

"There 's no cause to make my health the subject of concern, sir. I assure you, I am laid down here because I am — tired, as you may say."

"That being the case, I shall dismiss all anxiety, madam; and since you are in so fair a way, I may as well broach some business I have with the Collector, in which you, too, should be interested. Upon my word, now I think upon it, 't would be a stroke of policy, madam, to win you over before I attack Frankland."

Agnes shook her head wearedly. "I have small influence with him in that way."

"Nay, never trust her!" broke in Frankland, quite delighted with Agnes's altered manner. "'T is she rules the roast and tyrannizes over us all; you will do well to begin with her."

"Oh! I am sure of that, and venture upon it the readier that I have great confidence in her good sense," said the Commissary, with re-established composure. "Nevertheless, I will spare my breath to cool my broth, and aim at both birds with the same stone. You remember our little talk about Hopkinton the day you rescued me from the mob. Ay! I see you do. Well, then, you must know I am but just back from another visit. Ah, Frankland! ah, madam! there 's the place for you both!"

"The same old story," said Frankland, smiling.

"The very same, save that I 've a new chapter to tell: this time while there I had you in mind, and looking about a bit, discovered several contiguous tracts, — some hundreds of acres in all, — held at a contemptible rate, which would make you a noble plantation. Bethink you, sir! Go down there and build a fine mansion, take along a dozen slaves, with horses and dogs, and you may keep the state of a prince on a few thousand pounds!"

Frankland dissembled his growing interest and cavilled: —

"If I could but place faith in this account of yours, my lord Commissary, no doubt I should speedily become a convert; but I have so often heard you draw upon the same glowing fancy in painting the glories of a future life, which you can know nothing about, that I beware of you a bit."

"Nay," said the Commissary, laughing, "if all my powers of imagination have availed to bring you no nearer heaven than you are, it proves them to be very limited; but here is no fancy at all, I assure you, but literal fact."

"But moving so far away from civilization is like going back to the savage state."

"Never a bit; you take your civilization with you. For the matter of that, say I, give me one thing or the other, — civilization or barbarism. As for this hybrid condition we are in here, — why, the wilderness is a thousand times to be preferred."

Frankland could find no objection to an opinion so often uttered in still stronger terms by himself.

"Life will blossom into new beauty and sweetness when we once get out of this stifling Puritan atmosphere," went on the clergyman, "where a man cannot do as he lists without having these busybodies nosing about to see if his household is ordered in all respects after the pharisaical pattern."

The reverend gentleman glanced keenly from one to the other as he stopped to take out his snuff-box; he must have been gratified at the look of real interest in both faces.

"But, after all," he went on, tapping the lid and offering Frankland a pinch, "talk is but talk; the proof of the pudding is in the eating. There is but one way to settle the matter, and that is, go and see for yourself. Come down both of you and visit us! Your fare may be indifferent, for Mrs. Price is slow in adapting herself to circumstances: she can do nothing without the Thursday market. But with all

its drawbacks — mark my words! — you will both come home converts to barbarism!"

Frankland gave a conditional promise, and the Commissary went his way, leaving the case to the cogent working of other influences.

Since their appearance together at the Chapel, public discontent, confined at first to whispered censure and corner mutterings, had gathered the force of a tempest, and now burst upon the head of the dismayed Collector in an overwhelming torrent of admonition, protestation, and threat. He awoke to the fact that there was a new factor in the social problem of which he had never before been aware. That which he had played with all his life as a fine and sounding phrase, now suddenly materialized and started up into terrible life as a frowning Nemesis.

Pending all this, whether by accident or design can never now be known, came the Commissary again with a more definite invitation. Frankland promptly accepted, and the two made a flying trip to the wilderness.

As his pastor predicted, Frankland came home full of enthusiasm, and in the course of the first evening sheepishly confessed to Agnes that he had already made overtures toward the purchase of a plantation.

She listened in silence to his glowing justification.

"'T is plain you do not want to go yonder," he said, with a natural interpretation of her silence. "You dread the rough life of the wilderness."

"I lived a rough life once, and was happy."

"That was when you were a child."

"Yes."

"And knew nothing better."

She repressed the words which rose to her lips, and he went on rather nervously and with constrained playfulness.

"But now you are a spoiled and pampered child of luxury, eh? Trust me, however! I will look out for your comfort."

She shook her head a little impatiently.

"What is it, then?" dropping his light tone.

"'T is cowardly to run away."

He flushed. The answer was a little startling. It availed, moreover, to set him thinking, for he walked up and down a long time in silence.

"My dear," he said, resuming his seat, "'t will not be pleasant for you to remain in this town."

"Nay, I cannot expect it should."

"But it will be harder than you think."

"It could not well be that."

"I may as well tell you that these busybodies are greatly aroused."

She nodded as if expecting to hear it.

"I have kept it from you because it seemed to no purpose that you should be pained. But now that this retreat is open to you, 't is well you should know the truth. They flood me daily with protests and exhortations, — nay, the rascals have dared to threaten. For myself, I shall never be at a loss for protection," — with a rattle of his sword-hilt — "but you, I fear, will be kept a prisoner here except when you go out with me."

Perhaps he expected some dismay at this announce-

ment, for he seemed somewhat irritated when she quietly answered: —

"They can do nothing worse than insult and affront me."

"I know not that."

"Whatever lengths they may go, let us not be frighted away, but stay and abide the penalty of our wrong-doing."

"But they will not suffer us to remain."

"They will assuredly not molest us in our home."

"I would not answer for them — crack-brained fanatics. At any rate, they will knit their beetle-brows, turn up their Puritanical noses, and wag their d——d insolent tongues after us wherever we go."

"If, however, we deserve no better treatment — "

"'Deserve'! How, tell me, have we injured them?"

"We have made a law unto ourselves."

"And in what does that injure them?"

"In the dangerous example to others, as it may be held."

Again there was a pause, and Frankland walked up and down.

"I had not thought, my dear, you would need urging to leave this wasp's-nest; but I am rejoiced that you find such strength in yourself, and that you hold their scorn at so cheap a rate."

"Nay," covering her face with a shudder, "it is terrible!"

"Yet you would stay and court it?"

"'T is that I would suffer rather than escape my deserts."

"Meantime our holding out will be held an aggravation of the offence."

"What signifies how it be held, if our motive be pure?"

"We should, moreover, by remaining, be perpetuating the dangerous example you tell of. Have we any right to do that?"

Agnes was silent; perhaps staggered at this consideration.

Frankland followed up his advantage. "A penalty imposed by a high moral authority one may bow to, but a gratuitous rebuke from these stiff-necked hypocrites, who are as full of secret vices as an egg is of meat — poh! poh! My love, you shall kiss no such rod of discipline. We will leave them to their sanctity, and God help them all!"

"If we had but some guidance in the matter —"

"We have the guidance of common-sense, and for the rest, I will take the responsibility. We cannot go wrong in getting from this into a purer atmosphere where Nature shall be our constant companion and the Commissary shall look after our souls."

Agnes did not look reassured, nor at all convinced. Several after discussions upon the same subject were to as little purpose. At a loss to sustain her position by argument, she retreated upon conscience. She knew it to be right because she felt it to be right. Socrates and his dialectics would retire discomfited before a woman intrenched in that stronghold. Frankland remembered her Puritan training, and looked hopeless. An unexpected event suddenly turned the tables in his favor.

He came home one day with his eyes kindling, and two round spots glowing upon his cheeks, — marks of excitement, one would have said, but for his quiet manner. His manner, indeed, was too quiet, and suggested control. Agnes detected the change instantly, and said: —

"Something has happened."

Without a word he handed out a letter sealed with black. Agnes glanced at the foreign postmark, the strange handwriting, and saw nothing else.

"What is it?"

"Note the address!"

She read aloud the superscription: "Sir Charles Henry Frankland, Bart."

He looked at her in suspense. It seemed a whole minute that she stood puzzling over it. It dawned upon her like a flash at last, and she grew ashen white.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE VERDICT AT LITTLE HARBOR.

THE death without issue of Sir Thomas Frankland, late Lord of the Admiralty, made his nephew over in America a baronet. Joined with the title were large proprietary interests, present and reversionary, dependent upon the terms of the will and the rights of the dowager Lady Frankland.

Notwithstanding Agnes's vague fears, the prefix to his name neither translated him out of the flesh nor brought with it any iron obligation to go back across the sea to the company of other creatures writing their names with like fantastic flourishes. On the contrary, he kept his mortal state, and with it certain human faults and frailties, among which need not necessarily be counted the shrewdness to see that a comfortable berth under Government, with a large and increasing income, might come no more amiss to a baronet than to a plain esquire.

Withal, however, he took time for ripe consideration; saying nothing meanwhile to Agnes, for the reason, no doubt, that his inclinations had not yet hardened into resolves. As he seems to have been quite unaware of her state of mind, so she on her part asked him no questions, nor broached the matter

in any way, but went on industriously giving rein to her imagination and working herself up to a fever of anxiety which reacted most unfavorably upon her convalescence. Plainly, Frankland had misinterpreted her emotion on receipt of the news, for he did not think necessary to speak a reassuring word to her during all the weeks of deliberation.

Oddly enough, his decision was at last precipitated by a sudden move of the Commissary in resigning his charge at the King's Chapel.

This step caused little sensation in town, for matters had long been coming to a crisis between Bishop Gibson's lordly deputy and his contumacious parishioners. But it left the Commissary free to carry out a cherished purpose of going to England to raise funds for his infant church in the wilderness.

In the course of his farewell preparations he went around one evening to Garden Court Street, and there made the suggestion which determined Frankland's plans.

After listening to the latter's civil regrets at his resignation, he suddenly broke out, —

"But about your own affairs, Sir Harry; I suppose by this the new plantation is contracted for."

"No; I must needs confess the whole matter is still in the clouds."

"Clouds, sir? Poh! What 's it doing so far out of reach?"

"Indeed," — a little sheepishly, — "I have well-nigh given up all thought of the matter."

"What has caused such a monstrous cooling off? You came home, I can vouch for it, glowing like a

firebrand. Come, sir, confess 't is your new dignity makes you so capricious ! "

" Nay, ask Miss Surriage ! "

" You, madam ? " turning to Agnes.

" She will not hear of going thither."

" Truly, the last quarter from which — "

The Commissary paused. His tone was more significant than his words. It was as well for him, perhaps, that Agnes was too much engrossed at the moment to heed either.

" And pray, madam, if you will pardon the curiosity, what may be your objections ? "

" I have none," faltered Agnes, reddening and paling.

" None ! " from the Collector.

" Now, sir," cried the triumphant Commissary, " how are you put to shame ! Upon whom will you next shift the responsibility of your fickleness ? "

" But — why, Agnes — "

" I have considered the matter more deeply since we talked upon it."

" And you are now reconciled to go yonder to live ? "

" If you still hold your purpose."

He stood foolishly staring. From his point of view amazement was justified ; the stultification was quite uncharacteristic. She sat flushed and discomfited before him, her face a book in which only crass masculine stupidity could fail to read the story of a power dominant even over a Puritan conscience.

" So, Sir Harry, you see it all lies with you," resumed the Commissary, blind to the private significances of the situation.

Frankland did not answer, but went and leaned upon the mantel-piece, then over to the window and drummed upon the glass. Agnes's eyes followed him in breathless suspense.

The new bells in Christ Church tolled the curfew hour. He took out his chronometer mechanically, to correct any variance.

"Well, sir?" from the impatient Commissary.

"If it lies with me, 't is soon settled."

"Eh?"

Agnes half rose in her chair.

"I 'll have the land before the week is out."

"Look, sir! Quick! the lady — she is swooning!"

But she was not. It was only a sudden faintness from which she speedily recovered. Making it, however, an excuse for retiring, she bade Mr. Price good-night and accepted Frankland's arm to the door.

Left to themselves, the two gentlemen returned to the subject, and the Commissary brought forth his proposition, which was an offer to let to Frankland his Hopkinton house during the year he was abroad, as a good vantage-point from which to oversee putting in order the new plantation. The offer was opportune and quite to Frankland's liking, and no objection being now feared from Agnes, the bargain was concluded upon the spot.

Sitting brooding upon the matter after the Commissary went, Frankland was suddenly seized with a notion, and dashed upstairs. He found Agnes in her dressing-room. Banishing the maid and hartshorn bottle, he administered a more effectual restorative.

"Foolish girl! so you had no more faith than to think this change in fortune was to take me away from you?"

She sought the nearest cover for her abashed face, which chanced to be his shoulder.

Thus the fates seemed against Agnes in her high purposes. On the contrary, all those invisible and industrious agencies seemed bent on smoothing the way in the other direction, — the broad, easy, and comfortable direction of flight, in which she now found herself borne insensibly onward.

In a fortnight they were packing up for Hopkinton. All was bustle and preparation. The change acted like a tonic upon her health; something of her usual spirits and vigor came back, as it seemed, with the need of them.

A print from an old pencil-drawing still preserved gives a very good notion of the Commissary's country-house, — Agnes's first home in Hopkinton. A quaint wooden structure it was, with a hip roof, and the front door entering at one corner. Embowered in shrubbery, and surrounded upon two sides by a stone wall, it stood close upon the highway, where was an open greensward enclosed between two cross-roads, with a guide-post in the midst.

In this serene retreat, far from frowning eyes and wagging tongues, busied with wholesome toil, cheered by Frankland's presence, and sharing with him the absorbing pleasure of planning the thousand and one details of their new home, Agnes had no opportunity to be morbid, no leisure to take thought of her own state, no time to be unhappy.

From this pastoral dream she was rudely awakened. Frankland came home from Boston one day with tidings of her father's death. He was amazed at its effect upon her. He could not understand how it should prove so shocking. She had no longer anything in common with her father. He had never been a companion to his children, nor, whatever he may have felt, ever showed that interest and sympathy which begets mutual confidence and draws parent and child together. All this she had often confessed when talking of her early life. Why, then, this excessive grief? Thus he reasoned with her. She dumbly shook her head and made no answer. What was the use of answer! The fact that he could ask such a question showed how little he suspected chords in her heart struck to agony by that event which stood for so much beside the mortal release of one soul.

The news had been some time upon the road. There was doubt if she could arrive in time for the funeral. Despite some expostulation from Frankland, she set out early the next morning to make the attempt. He accompanied her as far as Boston, whence, provided with fresh horses, she went on alone to Marblehead.

It was late in the afternoon when she entered the little town. A welcoming breeze blew up from the sea, cooling her hot cheeks and tossing about her hair as she surmounted the ridge overlooking the harbor. Unconsciously she drew her lungs full of the honest salt vapor. She looked abroad over the little town; the sinking sun lit up the western fronts and gables

into sharp prominence, and threw long shadows across the narrow streets and down the eastern slopes to the little harbor where the ships lay rocking and nodding about like a lot of old gossips having a twilight gabble, — the same old features, yet how shrunk and shrivelled; and with what changed eyes she had come back to them! All that belonged to Nature, — the sky, the sea, the rocks, the distant hills, — so vast, so expansive, and filled with freshest life! All that belonged to man, so cramped, mean, squalid, and decaying!

Long accustomed to the luxury and elegance of her appointments, Agnes quite forgot the impression they must needs make upon her former townsmen. Busied with larger thoughts, she rolled along through the crooked streets quite oblivious of the sensation she created until awakened to the fact by some comment from the gaping crowd as she neared her mother's cottage. Then, suddenly changing her destination, she went thundering up the rocky steep to the shabby little door of the Fountain.

Goodman Salkins stood lazily smoking a pipe in the doorway. Overcome for a moment by the sudden appearance of a coach and four, he stood stupidly staring at them until, called to himself by a sharp challenge from the footman, he came forward, ducking and scraping, hat in hand, to usher in the grand lady in whom he failed to recognize his barefooted kitchen wench of former years.

Intent only upon her errand, Agnes greeted him as though they had parted but yesterday.

"Am I in time?"

"Heigh?"

"For the funeral?"

"Funneral — ye?"

"Yes, yes, my father; is he buried yet?"

"Por-rdon, me leddy, oi 'm growin' old, 'n' a bit wull-gotherin' i' my wits; who is 't ye 're talkin' o'?"

"Why, my own father, man; dead and gone."

"Yer for-rther, said ye?"

"Yes," turning to look across the cove. "Who are those yonder about the house? That may be the funeral now. See, there are more coming; it must be so. Goodman Salkins, look you attend to these men and horses; give them the best you have! For myself, I will stay yonder with my mother."

"Yer mother-r! Never-r tell me yer our old Ag Surriage!"

"Yes, yes," impatiently; "and I must make haste over yonder. I am perhaps too late already."

"No, no, yer i' toime, never-r fear. The berryin' was put off fur ye; folks doubted 'f ye 'd come, a' but Goody Surriage. She stuck stoutly to 't ye 'd be her', 'n' her' ye be! Eh, to think o' yer bein' Ag Surriage! Ye 'd not loike, mebbe, to bring back th' old toimes now ye ha' grown so gr-rond! Oh, never-r fret! ye 'll be i' toime, oi tell ye! An' so ye 're our-r Ag! Goodness 'n' mer-rcy! ye ha' coome up into a foine shape! Her' 'll be yer best way; th' old path is given up; they ha' blosted th' r-rock yonder-r — see! Eh, but ye wor a sure-footed little hussy i' those toimes; oi 'd never-r a one loike ye since, for war-rk. Take yer toime; ther 's no haste, oi soy!"

Unheeding the garrulous old man, Agnes hastened to the edge of the cliff, and gathering up her skirts

tripped down the rude steps cut in the rock to the beach, and made her way quickly around the little cove to her mother's door.

Gathered about the entrance was a little group of fishermen talking in low tones, who at her approach hastened in some precipitation to make way, and gazed after her with muttered comments of curiosity and interest.

She stopped upon the threshold of the little cabin and looked about with a hesitating air.

It was a gloomy interior. The walls and ceiling, blackened with the smoke and soot of a generation, gave a sombre look to the little living-room, which was dimly lighted by two small windows. Otherwise, it had an air of decency; the rough floor had been scrubbed to cleanliness, the fireplace filled with hemlock boughs, and a sheet pinned across the lower end of the room, hiding the little flock-bed and a litter of utensils which had been hastily thrust aside. Chairs of divers patterns had been brought in from the neighbors'; a table stood against the wall, covered with a coarse white cloth, and furnished with jugs of beer and cider, bread and cheese, salted beef, and seed-cakes.

Over against the pinned-up sheet stood the coffin on a rude trestle. A woman sat near, fanning away the swarming flies with a bough. Other women stood about the room.

Oblivious of the humanity, — the staring women, and the men peering in through the door, — Agnes threw herself on her knees beside the coffin, and laid her head on the dead man's bosom.

After a space she rose, and gazed intently down upon the still face, — an honest face enough, in which there was no evil, nor much of good either, the sordid lines telling merely of small interests and dull intelligence. The soul gone forth had, it would seem, never been half kindled in the man; and so, after glimmering and smouldering for half a century, had flickered out from inanition.

Some vague impression of this came to Agnes as she stood with ripened intelligence studying the face she had once thought so wise and strong; and as if with a sudden pang at the unfilial thought, she stooped and tenderly kissed the rough hands, — hands which death itself had failed to whiten, with their begrimed nails and scars and stains of toil.

Thus she stood, unconscious of anything in the room but the Silent Presence before her. The women gathered in a group, whispered, and looked askance. Her air of distinction, her rich dress, her white, jewelled hands, her silent grief, left no doubt of her identity. Word was soon passed to Goody Surriage, who came hurrying from the small bedroom where she was seated with her children.

"Oh, Ag, Ag! are ye come home? Oi feared ye moight n't get wor-rd. Oi ha' been waitin' 'n' longin' fur ye. Oh, my choild, my poor choild! ye ha' no for-rther now! He 's gone, Ag; we 'll ha' him no more. He talked o' ye, Ag, — often 'n' often he talked o' ye. An he could but know ye ha' come home to us an' are lookin' down on him now! But he cannot see, poor dear! he 'll never-r see nor hear-r us agin, never-r! never-r! never-r! Oh, Ag, Ag! my her-rt is

broke wi' sorrow! A good mon he was, so koind 'n' peaceable; ther' wor never-r a koinder. An oi could but ha' him back a minute's toime to say oi 'm sorry fur a' th' hor-rd wor-rds oi ha' given him; but they wor not mony o' late. Forther-r in Heaven, forgi' us; we ha' wor-rnin' by this to bridle our tongues an' leave the choidin' to Thysel'!"

At this moment there was a little bustle outside, and the minister entered, followed directly by the fishermen, nearly filling the little room.

"Sh! her' be the minister-r, Ag! Good-day, sir-r; this be my choild, my own choild, sir-r, though ye 'd never-r believe 't, come home to — to her poor for-rther's berryin'," with a loud burst of sobs.

Agnes courtesied with reverence, and dropped her eyes before the austere gaze of the preacher.

One of the women came and whispered in his ear. Presently he took a Bible from his pocket and cleared his throat as if to begin the service, when directly Goody Surriage precipitated herself with loud sobs upon the coffin.

"Oh, Ed, Ed! they're makin' ready to take ye away fro' me. Look up! Open yer oi 'n' look up at me, mon! 't is the last chance — See him now! He cannot be dead, sure, wi' that look loike a choild that has fallen asleep. Ed, Ed! will ye not speak to me when my her'rt is breakin'?"

Led away by Agnes and one of the neighbors into the other room, the poor dame broke forth into a fresh fit of sobbing which quite drowned the preacher's voice.

After the service the whole company proceeded on

foot to the old burying-ground upon the hill, — the fishermen reverently bearing the body of their late comrade, and all looking on while the shallow grave was filled and the sexton pounded snugly into place the covering of green sods.

Coming home in the fast-fading twilight, they found the table spread for supper, the windows thrown open, flowers placed about, and every effort made to give a look of cheer to the little cabin.

Agnes sat upon the bench outside the door, and the sobbing dame, drying her eyes, bustled about, returning things borrowed for the funeral, thanking her neighbors for their kind offices, and now and then bringing forth some reluctant fishwife to Agnes, with, —

"Her' 's Goody Tibbets, Ag," — or Goody Cooper, or Goody Hubbard, — "old acquaintance they be; they mind ye when ye wor a little hussy."

The women, though gazing upon Agnes as if from irresistible fascination, seemed inclined to hold no converse with her, and were uneasy to be gone. With her brothers and sisters she made no better headway. They were so much in awe of her, and so uncomfortable at her overtures, that at last she was fain to desist. Supper over, the last of the neighbors withdrew, and the rest of the family presently retired, leaving Agnes alone with her mother. They sat together upon the bench outside the door. It had been the dead man's favorite seat. The recollection of this brought on a fresh accession of grief from the dame, who now, secure of a sympathetic listener, poured forth a history of her husband's illness, and, continu-

ing backwards, of all her own trials and sufferings since they had last met. Recurring at length to her present destitute condition, deprived of her husband and getting too old to work, she excited her own sympathies to such a degree that she wept herself asleep upon Agnes's shoulder.

Disengaging herself after a space from her heavy burden, Agnes brought a shawl to cover the sleeping woman, and stole gently away. The moon had risen, and the sea shone like silver beneath its rays. Save for the splashing of the waves upon the beach, or the echoing footsteps of the sentinel making his solitary round at the fort above, deep silence brooded over the little cove.

Agnes paced back and forth upon the sands; it was like returning in a dream to the long-lost life of childhood. By and by she climbed the rocks and passed before the little inn. Quaint and pretty it looked in its midnight guise, all its shabbiness silvered over by the cheating moon. Pausing at the well, she looked down into its black depths and waked the slumbering pool with a falling pebble. Wandering on, she mounted again to the old churchyard, and threaded her way in and out among the crowded mounds to the hoar willow by Goody Lattimore's grave, where she had so often sat with Job. There, too vividly perhaps, came back to her thoughts of the sturdy loyalty and devotion of him now wandering, she knew not where, upon the wide ocean or in foreign lands; for she started up with a sudden groan, and walked back and forth with hands pressed to her bosom. Moved by a sudden impulse, she

stooped and scraped with her ring a strip of lichen from the hard blue headstone, and hurried away.

Coming to her father's grave, she threw herself down upon the fresh turf and gave way to tears. Relieved by this natural outburst, she went back in chastened mood to keep vigil over her sleeping mother.

Next day she made more hopeful advance with her brothers and sisters. What with the dame's co-operation, and her own kindly manner, she prevailed over their shyness to talk with her without constraint, and confide in her as to their plans and purposes, — a confidence which, it is said, they never regretted. When it came time for her to set out for home, dreading perhaps to go back to the little inn, she sent for the coach, and started from her mother's door.

The whole business of the little world round about came to a standstill pending her departure. Goodman Salkins, with his cook, barmaid, and hostler, stared across from the doorstep of the Fountain; the skippers on the vessels in the cove paused in the management of their craft; the fishermen on the shore dropped their tools; the housewives peered forth from their cabin doors; and the children gathered in a gaping group about the Surriage cabin, — every eye intent upon the solitary figure sitting erect in the grand equipage, while the inconsolable dame, holding fast her daughter's hand, clung to the carriage-door and cried between her sobs: —

"Oh, Ag, my choild! how can oi ever-r let ye go fro' me? Oi'll never-r see ye agin, — never-r, never-r,

oi won't. All are leavin' me, — a' an' everybody. Ah, ye 're my own choild, whatever comes. Oi ha' brought ye into th' war-rld, 'n' oi ha' given suck to ye, 'n' oi 'll not believe hor-rm o' ye. 'T is not fur us poor sinfu' creatures to judge one another-r. They tell str-range stories about ye, gir-rl, an' say shamefu' things; but oi 'll not believe 'em, Ag; yer old mother-r 'll never-r believe 'em."

"They are true!"

"Eh?"

"Those shameful stories are all true!"

"Forther-r o' Mer-rcies!"

"Nothing can be said of me worse than the simple truth." She brushed back the straggling gray hairs and laid her cheek upon her mother's wrinkled forehead.

"Oh, Ag — Ag, 't is not the truth; oi 'll not believe it!"

"Yes, God pity and help you, my dear — dear — dear mother, it *is* the truth!"

"Stop! stop! ye 'll break my her-rt!"

"I will stop. I will go away. Pray that you may never see me again! Think of me henceforth only as a shame and disgrace to you and to him we yesterday laid to rest!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

A HUNTING-PARTY.

LONG celebrated in song and story, Frankland's place at Hopkinton is distinctly remembered by many still living. Imagination gladly yields the rein to Reality in setting it forth. Let no latter-day visitor, however, who would not be grievously disappointed, seek to realize for himself the charm of the following picture, drawn by one familiar with the place before fire and decay had wrought their devastating work: —

"The tract lies along the southern and western slope of a noble eminence called in the Nipmuck tongue *Magunco*, or 'the place of the great trees,' where the celebrated John Eliot had in earlier times an Indian church. The summit of the hill, now covered with a fine growth of thrifty chestnut, commands a view of the peak of the Wachusett and Monadnock mountains on the northwest; of the beautiful village of Hopkinton and Hayden Row on the southwest; of a rich and varied landscape on the south; and of the charming village of Ashland in the valley where the Concord River and the Cold Springs blend their waters in the east. The hillside to the south and west abounds in cool and gushing springlets, which, leaving lines of freshest verdure in their course, unite and form a brook well stored with trout, and

large enough to turn a mill; and which, sweeping round the southeastern base of Magunco, passes through a pleasant valley into the Cold Spring stream.

"On an eligible and commanding site upon the southwestern inclination of this Indian hill the baronet erected a commodious manor-house; reduced about one hundred and thirty acres of his land to tillage; planted an extensive orchard; built a costly barn one hundred feet in length and surmounted by a cupola, a granary, which was set upon elaborately wrought freestone pillars, and houses for his servants, which were equal to those of many of the farmers in the neighborhood. Having a taste for horticulture, he introduced a great variety of the choicest fruit, such as apples, pears, plums, peaches of excellent quality, apricots and quinces from England; and having an eye for beauty, he set out elms and other ornamental trees upon his grounds, and embellished his walks and garden with the box, the lilac, hawthorn, and the rose; some portion of this shrubbery still blooms as beautifully as when George II. sat upon the throne.

"The mansion was large and strongly built. It stood at some distance from the main road, and was approached by a noble avenue cut through the chestnut forest and by a flower-garden tastefully arranged in front. The spacious hall, sustained by fluted columns, was hung with tapestry richly ornamented with dark figures on a ground of deepest green, — according to the fashion of the times. The chimney-pieces were of Italian marble, and cornices of stucco-work and other costly finishing embellished the parlor, ante-rooms, and chambers.

"The grounds immediately around the house were formed into terraces by the hands of slaves, and the waters from the living springs above clothed them in liveliest verdure."

As may be believed, time was needed to set up such an establishment so far from town. There was brain-work and hand-work enough and to spare for both the busy builders; and in thus watching its slow growth from stage to stage, a feeling of ownership was naturally enough engendered, so that when at last Agnes stepped into the completed house, it was like a bird settling into its nest with the true sense of belonging which inheres in a home.

So insensibly, moreover, the bustle of preparation subsided into the routine of life that the opportunity which there is reason to believe she awaited for entering upon a season of self-examination and penance seemed never to arrive. Life blossomed about her in fulness of beauty; an atmosphere of luxury shut out all sordid reminders of toil and care. A spirit of peace, bequeathed as it were by the old Indian apostle, pervaded the sacred hill and far-stretching valley. Nature was her only neighbor; and Nature, far from making her reproaches, welcomed her with largest sympathy. The sky arched tenderly and mysteriously above her, the sun every morning lighted up anew the outspread panorama, the wind brought the perfume of the fields and the thousand-voiced anthem of the forest to gladden every sense, while love, tender, steadfast, and devoted, crowned the whole.

Thus, hedged about with every favoring circumstance, doubt and misgiving gained no admission to her mind. By degrees, too, despite some futile probing, a certain numb pain within dwindled to a vague

unrest, which however, though often put to flight, still persistently returned to haunt the heart where it late held sway.

These moments of pensiveness were not unnoted by Frankland.

"What are you thinking of, my dear?" catching her one day in such a mood.

She looked detected and stammered in reply,—

"Of — why, nothing of moment."

"Nay, but of what?"

"To what purpose repeat such random thoughts?"

"But if I am concerned to know?" somewhat piqued.

"How should you be concerned?"

"As I must needs be by everything that affects your happiness; there was sadness in your look. Confess it — come, you shall not escape me!"

"I — I was thinking," in some confusion, "I ought not — 't is wicked in me to be so happy!"

"Ay, I mistrusted some such folly, and I will tell you the secret of it: 't is that you have not enough to do. When we were busy ordering our household you had no time for the like whimsies. Now, my dear, I will propose a cure."

She looked at him with an air of suspense.

"We will have a party; 't is time I had my friends down from town. They are curious about the plantation, and I have constant upbraidings for my niggard hospitality."

"But —" with a look of dismay.

"Eh?"

"I — I —"

"You would not have them?"

"Why, yes, — only I shall be at a loss how to behave with so many gentlemen."

"If you have not a mind, they shall not come."

"Yes, yes; but I have; they shall come; I would rather have them. Pardon me, 't was but a passing consternation."

"But that I know 't will be best for you, I would not press the point; but these will be men of wit and understanding, — none of those fools from yonder Saints' Rest."

"If they be your friends, dear sir, they shall be welcome."

"They shall be your friends, and welcome for their own sakes, I promise you, before any long acquaintance. Wait a bit — let us see!" — drawing forth a pocket-tablet and writing the names as he talked, — "there will be, Brinley, Lyde, Cradock, are three; Sheafe, four; Auchmuty and Overing, six; and ourselves, eight, — two tables of whist for the evenings."

"Oh, but find, I beg, some other man to make up the whist! I shall be ill at ease among such an array of masculines!"

"Very well, then, let us have over the Commissary; they are all old friends, and have not met, I 'm sure, since he came home from England."

And so it was concluded; the invitations were sent and eagerly accepted, and Sir Harry's hunting-party was in a small way the talk of the town.

Agnes received her guests with quiet dignity, yet with a particularity of manner which was significant:

a certain neutral look, that is, which she bent upon each as he was presented, and a little delay in her salute as if leaving it to the stranger to strike the key-note of their after intercourse, whether of cordiality or reserve. One would think she could not have been left long in doubt upon this occasion.

"Madam, I am most honored with your acquaintance."

"A privilege I have long craved."

"Report does but small justice, after all, to such perfections," with a supplemental stare of admiration.

"Count another, madam, from this day, in the number of your ardent admirers!"

"Ah, Sir Harry, sly dog that you are, to hide such a paragon down here in the wilderness!"

"The one charm, madam, lacking to complete this place a paradise, is here, I find, supplied," pressing her hand.

Agnes listened with an air of endurance, not very appreciative, it seemed, of such very handsome compliments, and afterwards was with difficulty persuaded to make one at the hunt.

The hunt was successful, and lasted several days, during which the depths of the forest where aforetime old Pomaham led his band of praying Indians rang with the baying of the dogs and the sharp crack of the sportsman's gun.

But a sudden storm put an end to the sport. The merry gentlemen got up one morning to find themselves prisoners. Ruefully enough they looked from the windows upon the vista of dripping trees, the avenue washed into gullies, the water-spouts spurting

streams at every corner, the dejected poultry huddled beneath the shed, and the weather-vane pointing persistently east.

Thereupon the indoor resources of the establishment were called into play. Agnes engaged the Commissary in a game of backgammon, while Frankland took away the more volatile spirits to the barn, where with the big doors opened to the south they pitched quoits and had jumping-matches, talked politics and real estate, and between times lolled upon the hay listening to the roar of the rain upon the roof, the stamping of the horses, the cooing of the pigeons in the loft, and the grunting of the pigs in the cellar, — a rural concert curious and novel to town-bred ears.

In the afternoon came an unexpected diversion. As the gentlemen sat over their wine after dinner, a wagon drove up with a heavy box which two slaves presently came dragging into the hall.

"A hammer and chisel, there, quick, and off with the cover!" said Frankland, coming out. Then, before his order could be executed, suspecting the contents: "Bravo! here you are, gentlemen! Agnes, love!"

The company came trooping from the dining-room and Agnes from the harpsichord.

"An invoice of books from London! Come! every one shall have a finger in the pie of unpacking!"

All gathered eagerly about as their busy host tore away the heavy wrapping-paper and passed out to the right and left the upper layer of books.

"What have we to begin with?" stripping the

cover from one in his hand. "'Essay' on Criticism.'"

"'Dunciad.'"

"'The Iliad.'"

"'Rape of the Lock.'"

"Ay, to be sure, the new Pope, Warburton's edition. Here are more; there should be nine volumes. 'T is but just out, and has set everybody to reading the great Alexander."

"Yes," spoke up the Commissary; "I came away from London in the full tide of it."

"But 't is said the enthusiasm is quite extraordinary, — far greater, indeed, than when the little man was alive."

"Naturally enough, too; 't is the first time his works have been presented as a whole."

"'T were a pity, indeed," put in Auchmuty, "if he should be forgotten before he is cold in the grave!"

"Cold, sir!" from a memory fiend; "he is nearly ten years dead."

"'Ten years'! and what is that but a wag of the historical pendulum?" returned Auchmuty, standing by his point. "His fame should properly be on the rise; there was never one lived like him, nor ever will be another so crammed with genius."

"Poh, sir! Who knows what the future may bring?" said some doubter.

"Let it produce the greatest prodigy, yet he cannot go beyond Pope in wit and elegance."

"No, nor in profundity of thought."

"Nor felicity of diction."

"Nor music of numbers."

"Nor brilliancy of antithesis."

The chorus of voices was unanimous, and the Commissary summed up: —

"No, he must ever remain the great master of English verse."

Whereupon there was such a murmur of assent and general wagging of heads as silenced the doubter.

"What next, gentlemen?" said Frankland, passing out more books.

"'Cato.'"

"Yes; and that," turning about with an air of irritation, "is to complete my set of Addison, broken, mark you, by some wretch of a borrower who has the hardihood to keep a volume with my book-plate on the cover. What have you, Sheafe?"

"Steele."

"I warrant you. That designing bookseller practises upon my weakness for Bickerstaff, and will be always slipping in something of Sir Richard's. What is it now!"

"'The Tender Husband' and 'The Conscious Lovers.'"

"Bound in one? Take it home, with my compliments; I have them both on the shelf. Eh, Brinley?"

"'Tom Jones'!"

"Never! Bravo! 't has come then, at last. That book is several years out, and I give you my word this is the first time I have been able to lay clutch on it."

"'T is clever," said the Commissary, in a tone implying reserves.

"I believe you, indeed. 'T is held by the best

judges in England a masterpiece, and that nothing has ever been produced in that vein in the least degree approaching it."

"Always excepting 'Clarissa Harlowe,'" said a voice from behind.

"Right, Mr. Cradock; Richardson stands at the head."

Auchmuty's dogmatism brought Frankland out of the box to debate the point.

"Richardson! Why, to be sure, Richardson has parts, but he plainly falls short of genius. His vein of wit is tenuous to begin with, and you must allow he spins it out to prodigious fineness. Then his divine Clarissa tires you out with her eternal preaching."

"Egad! Sir Harry,"—from a bibulous voice at his side,—"I suspect you rather of sympathizing with Lovelace."

Arch glances were exchanged between several of the gentlemen.

"But," continued the convivial gentleman, noting the effect of his sally, "having yourself been more successful than Richardson's hero—"

"Sh!"

"Silence, sir!" in an undertone, from the Commissary.

Frankland bit his lip and glanced anxiously at Agnes.

She made no pretence of unconsciousness, but wore the look of calm endurance before described.

"'T is not a matter of wit alone, sir," went on Auchmuty, intent on his point, and quite blind to the

fact that he had passed over a social whirlpool; "there is his great ingenuity, his grace of style, and the justness of his characters and scenes. There is his pathos, too — "

"Ah, I grant you the pathos," said Frankland, still anxiously regarding Agnes; "there is one of my family who has nearly wept herself blind over 'Pamela,' which yet she will never have done reading."

Agnes neglecting to enter the discussion by the door so adroitly held open for her, the Commissary sententiously came to the rescue.

"And nothing could more strongly attest her taste and discrimination, sir!"

"For an antidote, I have read her 'Joseph Andrews,' which, you know, was writ as a satire upon 'Pamela;' but all to no purpose. I promise myself now to win her over with 'Tom Jones;' for if that be, as 'tis said, better than the former book, 'tis not in the human heart to resist it."

"Who is Hume?" asked some one, helping himself from the box.

"A Scotsman lately come into notice for some bold opinions," answered Frankland, returning to his task.

"'Tis amazing what a stir one may create by the expression of a little doubt and blasphemy!" sneered the Commissary. "What name does he give to his rubbish?"

"'An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals.'"

Overing hereupon slyly whispered something in Brinley's ear, at which they both laughed without disguise.

"Nay, gentlemen; no shots in the back," said Frankland, from the box. "'T is not hard to see your drift. Here, Auchmuty, is another in the same vein from Voltaire, — the book he writ upon us, as you know, after his sojourn in England."

"'Lettres Philosophiques,'" said Auchmuty, scanning the titlepage.

"Do not waste your time on that scurvy infidel," broke in the Commissary, hotly, "who has been cast out of his own country and is wandering over the face of the earth in search of an asylum! Even the King of Prussia, who is more than half barbarian himself, could not tolerate the dirty little toad of a Frenchman!"

Winking at those nearest him to let this pass, Frankland handed over the book without further comment, and dived again into the box.

"Aha, gentlemen! the greatest treat left to the last, as is fitting! Here, in a package by themselves, are the very latest books of the day. I charged him to send all which were for any reason the talk of the town. Here, then, is what they are living on at the London clubs and drawing-rooms; help yourselves, then, — first come, first served."

There was a general scramble upon this invitation, at which Frankland stood by laughing.

"Here," he said, "I have a letter from Walpole, which tells the verdict of the wits and pundits at home."

"'Amelia.'"

"Harry Fielding's latest. Ah, lucky dog that I am, to have two of his books unread! — a feast for

the gods! Though, 't is said, this is a great falling off from 'Tom Jones.' What if it be? Homer nods. A man can't be always at his best; and at his worst, Fielding must needs be infinitely diverting."

"Tell me, now," said Lyde, holding up a book, "who is the author of this, that he dared not sign his name, — 'The Rambler'?"

"I know nothing but that his name is Johnson, — a big, clumsy bumpkin, one of the Grub Street crew, who lives upon his wits."

"He is held in great esteem among the clergy," spoke up the Commissary, "for his extraordinary learning and great abilities."

"He has need of them, to follow in the wake of the 'Spectator' and the 'Idler' with his trumpery 'Rambler,'" said some one, upon the safe general principle of crying down a new candidate for favor.

"'Peregrine Pickle.' What have you to say to that, in the list of your judgments?" asked Cradock.

"Why, 't is thought to carry the author's reputation beyond 'Roderick Random;' but here, gentlemen," opening a book in his own hand, "is, I am assured, the prime favorite of the hour; the book with which all London is at this moment ringing, — 'Sir Charles Grandison.' Here, you champions of Richardson; you shall fight for it among yourselves!"

So many new books procured a quiet evening. With literary appetites whetted to keenness by wholesome abstinence, the company sat down and gloated over this unexpected feast.

Next morning dawned clear and bright, and the party broke up, the gentlemen taking their leave with many elaborately turned compliments and expressions of regret.

Agnes came to the door to see them off. The coach drove thundering down the avenue and out upon the turnpike amid shouts and huzzas, Frankland vigorously waving his hat.

"See, see! They are all waving to you!"

Agnes courtesied mechanically, her eyes fixed in another direction.

"Well, my dear, it has been a famous rout, and very successful in the main," sitting down at her feet in the doorway.

She nodded assent.

"I hope you are now cured of your dread of a party."

"I hope so, indeed."

"You made a great impression, I assure you! They were one and all loud in your praises."

"I could well have spared such laudation."

He looked up searchingly into her face. "Did you not find them agreeable?"

"I have a sincere regard for the rector; he has shown himself very friendly. For the rest, they seemed all to be gentlemen of much ingenuity and information."

"And very polite to you."

With her eyes fixed upon the far-off coach, now looking like a big black fly as it crawled up a distant hill, Agnes did not answer.

"Eh, my dear?"

"They were too polite, and not polite enough."

"And what may that Delphic utterance signify, love? I do not understand."

Turning away with a look pitiably dreary, she answered, —

"I do not expect you ever will."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THE BROWN CLAIM."

HAVING with much toil and trouble set up his fold in the wilderness, the Rev. Mr. Price — commissary now no longer since the death of Bishop Gibson — bestirred himself with equal zeal to gather in his flock.

To this end, one summer evening, he drove with his wife over to call on the Franklands, — so the household was called in the neighborhood. The ladies had never met; and whether good Mrs. Price accompanied her husband on this Christian and neighborly errand out of her own large charity, or by his procuring, it is now impossible to say.

Agnes and Sir Harry were sitting upon the front porch, and saw them turn in at the gate.

"Who be these coming up the avenue?"

There was a note of agitation in her voice which made Frankland turn to look.

"A man and woman in a chaise, as I make out," squinting his eyes.

"'T is a lady!"

"So it would seem."

"She cannot know —"

"Eh, know what? Why, 't is the Prices coming to wait upon us. What now, you 're surely not going, love?"

"No," recovering herself, and repressing an impulse to escape.

Frankland hurried to welcome his guests and usher them into the drawing-room. Agnes kept her seat, and he presently came out with the announcement that Mrs. Price demanded to see her. She went in intrenched behind her neutral manner. The parson straightway laid waste her defences by swift and direct assault.

"I want you and my wife to be close friends, madam; so pray you make haste and further your acquaintance. Out here in the wilds it behooves all Christians to be hand and glove."

Frankland looked on, keenly alive to the points of the situation, but with suspended admiration, as if in some doubt whether the parson's effective greeting were due to tactics or to natural imperativeness.

Mrs. Price, from kindly intuition, let us hope, lost no time in following her husband's lead, who thereupon seized Frankland's arm and took him aside, leaving the ladies together.

"Indeed, as my husband says, a neighbor counts for much in the country," began the visitor, studying with undisguised curiosity a person of whom she had heard much. "I trust I shall acquire a good character for neighborliness, although I am somewhat late in beginning."

"You are kind to say it," said Agnes, gravely and without warmth.

"As Mr. Price was in some measure instrumental in bringing you hither, it is the more incumbent on us to do what we may to make it agreeable."

"On the contrary, the obligation seems rather to be upon us."

There was a pause, during which the visitor, as it proved, was casting about for a new topic.

"I must compliment you, madam, upon the extreme order in which you left everything behind you at our house."

"I did no more, surely, than was fit and becoming. I hope you expected nothing less."

"But with the double labor of getting settled here in your own house — "

"This? Oh, I assure you it was rather diversion; our thoughts were so engaged we counted the work as nothing."

"I fear — that is — you — I would say — "

"Pardon!"

"'T is very fine weather we 've been having."

"Yes, barring the storm of the past week."

"To be sure it — I had forgotten the rain — You must needs find it very tame here after Boston?"

The good lady was pulling hard in the conversational harness.

"So far, not at all."

"But do you not greatly miss the society of town?"

"I had no society there, madam."

"Oh, indeed!"

Such merciless candor, intolerant of any gloze or compromise, was most hard to deal with; the good woman struggled on, however.

"The people here, I am sure, you must have found friendly enough."

"I could not wish for better treatment."

"No, no, I am assured of it; the danger among so few is of too frequent visits."

"I have so far escaped that danger."

"'T is because you are so remote."

"Yes, here we are withdrawn; but at your house where most of my time has been spent — "

"Ah! there you found the visitations frequent enough, I 'll be bound."

"Not altogether burdensome; to be frank with you, madam," — discarding suddenly her ironical tone, — "this present honor I am receiving at your hands is my first experience of the like ceremony since coming to the country."

"Oh! ah! — why — indeed, I am amazed — Perhaps 't is that you do not — We never see you at church." The disconcerted visitor clutched at any available straw.

"Yes, yes; how is that?" from Mr. Price himself, returning to the room. His wife looked up quickly, but had the address to repress a sigh of relief.

"I have too small a flock here not to miss even a single ewe."

"'T is a weary way to go to hear an indifferent discourse," said Frankland, from behind, dexterously drawing the fire upon himself.

"That, sir, will not excuse you; you can at least take part in the service, and sleep through the sermon, as I make no doubt you do. But," turning to Agnes, "how is it we do not see you, madam?"

Agnes looked the questioner very calmly in the face, and replied with a significancy of manner which atoned for the literal prevarication: —

"I have thought the intrusion of strangers among your little flock might not be altogether welcome, sir."

"'Strangers!' poh! we will hear no more of that. 'Strangers!' we 'll have no such word here. You shall meet; you shall know each other. Come, now, we will have a party! I will have you all at my house. What say you to Monday night?"

Agnes hesitated and looked uneasy.

"'Monday night'—" Frankland began evasively.

"Nay, sir, you shall gain nothing by excuses," went on the energetic clergyman. "No matter for the time, one is as good as another, the first vacant night, whenever it be— Let us say Monday week?"

"Since there is no escape, we will come with great pleasure," said Frankland, laughing, but casting a doubtful glance at Agnes.

Satisfied with this assurance, the visitors presently went away.

"'T was very well meant of them,— this civility," said Frankland, in a sounding manner.

"Yes."

"Mrs. Price is a fine woman."

"She is most kindly, I am sure."

"Yet you treated her with scant courtesy, my dear."

"My act, then, ill answered to my intent, which was the most absolute civility."

"But quite without warmth."

"Because I am persuaded she was best pleased I should keep a distance, and would have been greatly disconcerted at my approach."

"'T was your fancy."

"No, poor woman! 'tis plain enough she was dragged hither; but I give her great credit, none the less."

"But what about the party?"

"We will go."

Frankland naturally looked surprised at this answer, so prompt, so quiet, and so utterly unexpected.

"But they may be rude," he suggested, as if sifting for reasons.

"And if they be, God still lives. He will forgive them so slight a trespass."

She picked up a newspaper from the table and looked over it listlessly, Frankland pondering her odd answer. Something in the paper presently arrested her attention, and she asked abruptly in quite another voice, —

"Do you take count of all the vessels that sail from Boston?"

"In numbers you mean?"

"No; but do you see them, go aboard of them, know them, as it were?"

"No, indeed, child; not a tithe."

"And do you not hear their names?"

"Oh, yes."

"And if you heard a name a good many times you mayhap would remember it."

"Ye-es,"—yawning—"the old stagers, those constantly plying back and forth, no doubt I must."

Casting down the paper and idly taking a flower from a little jug near at hand, she slowly pulled it to pieces.

"Did you never — among those vessels do you remember a ship called —"

"Umph!"

"'The Pathfinder'?"

The pause, the hesitation, and a little change of tone challenged his attention.

"No-o-o; yet stay, it seems I do have a vague remembrance of such a name."

"But know not, I suppose, since your memory of the ship is so uncertain, whether she still trades to — Can you say to what port she sails?"

"Easily enough by my books; by my memory not at all."

Throwing away the dismantled flower-stalk, she took up the newspaper again, turning it over and rustling it about without purpose.

"Would it come to your knowledge if there were any change — that is, any mishap to the crew?"

"No."

"How long does it take a vessel to go to Portugal and back?"

"'T is quite impossible to say."

She looked up in some surprise.

"It depends on too many conditions; to wit, what luck they have in weather, what luck again in getting rid of their cargo and shipping another. Why do you ask?"

"Because I think that ship went to Portugal."

"'The Pathfinder'?"

"Yes; and I was wondering how long before she would come back."

"When did she go?"

"'T is a year and more ago."

"She may have come and gone again by this."

"I would like much to know when she is next in port."

"And why have you an interest so particular in that ship?"

"I knew one on board, of whom lately I chanced to think: an old friend and playmate he was from Marblehead."

"'Marblehead.' Ah, well thought on; thanks for the reminder! I have a letter for you; pardon my neglect; the Prices' visit put it out of my mind."

He drew from his pocket and handed her the following letter from Goody Surriage: —

DERE AG, — i ha been low in Mind since seein' ye. God in his Goodnis is plesed hevily to Visit an' afflick me. the Minister ses pray for to be resined to his Will, un i hop so to do; but 't is hord, Ag, to loose yer Forther un here such like Stories o' ye un from yer own Lips made good; but whatever cum, yer my own Child, un i pray for ye un want to see ye. O Ag, i am like a Pellicon in the Wildernis the Minister reads o' out o' the holy Book, left alone to mone un grone. un mor things i ha to bare. wat am i to do for my Bread, not to menshun the Roomatics has laid hoult on me? 't is a sad Wurld, un wer all pore Sinners, God help us! but for all is said un for all is done, yer my own Child, Ag, un' dere to my Hart, un will allers be. but wat i ha' to say, Ag, ther's one here tells me, un the Minister is of the same Mind, ther's somethin' in the Brown Clame Grondfother bot of the Savages, as ye know; un pore as i am ther may be a Forchun for me, for as Goody Lippett ses, an' she is writin' this for me, ther's the Lond, un ther it must stay, un' the biggest Villun of em all, Savage or White, could not take it away; un its down in

the Papers black un white a Part belongs to me, but i cant eat it, nor drink dry earth, nor ware it on my Back; un so wat am i better off, tell me thet. remember me to all inquirers. from yer suffrin' un Hart-broken Mother,

MARY SURRIGE.

"I must go thither at once," said Agnes, starting up.

"Is anything wrong?"

"My mother is sick; she is poor and forlorn. 'T is a shame to me to neglect her! Read for yourself!" tossing down the letter.

"And why did you not tell me your mother was in such straits?"

"To what end?"

"That I might help her."

"She wants none of your help; she shall never have help from you!" with a sudden flash of indignation.

He reflected a moment, as if to explain to himself this outburst, and answered very quietly, with an evident understanding of her mood:—

"I would not be officious, my dear, in thrusting myself into the matter; but let us talk about it a little! There may be ways in which I can be of service to your mother without putting upon her an obligation."

"She would not choose to be beholden to anybody."

"And she need not, perhaps. Let me ask: she speaks in this letter of the 'Brown Claim,'—what is that?"

"'T is of some lands down in Pemaquid,—a vast tract, 't is said, which my grandfather was one among

others to buy of the Indians; I put no faith in it. I have heard it prated of all my life, and yet it has come to nothing."

"She speaks of papers, here."

"Oh, 't is all in the papers, they say, fair and clear. I had no skill to read them in those days; others have told me. And yet if it be, 't is like treasure sunk in the sea, never to be come at; only my poor mother will be forever dreaming of a fortune in it."

"If she has papers, they may show a legal title."

"So she has, I am sure. And yet after all 't is but to a bone of contention; for the heirs of the others who bought with my grandfather have been for years, 't is said, wrangling over it, which my poor mother only escaped by having no means to engage in it."

Making no immediate reply to this, Frankland picked up the dame's letter again, and pondered it.

"Do you purpose going thither to-morrow?" he asked at length.

"Yes, God willing."

"Say to your mother, then, that if she will intrust me with those papers I will have the matter inquired into."

"'T is like you" — bursting out impulsively — "to be ever most kind when I have forgotten good manners and decency."

"Poh, silly girl! Stay!" as she was hurrying from the room. "I will go with you to town; let us take an early start, so that the horses may have a comfortable rest and bait."

"But I 'll take no horses farther than Boston."

"How then?"

"Pray you devise some other way for me! I would not again make a show of myself in the coach."

"Nothing easier; I will send you down in the Government boat, only you must make no long stop, lest I have official need of the vessel."

"Be assured I will make all haste."

On her previous transit through Boston, Agnes had been too much agitated to take note of anything. Now she gazed about with lively interest upon the many changes and improvements wrought in the single year of her absence. Coming to the Common, a strange spectacle awaited them: rows of young women with their spinning-wheels seated along the mall were busy at work in the open air, while elderly men and matrons went up and down the line to give them countenance and keep at a distance the good-natured and gaping crowd.

"What is this?"

Frankland laughed at Agnes's look of astonishment.

"You have not read your newspaper, my dear; this is the latest lunacy out of Bedlam; 't is 'the spinning craze.'"

"And why have they come forth so publicly, — is it a penance?"

"Never a bit! else they had never come. 'T is the fashion, my dear; 't is to encourage industry and thrift; these are daughters of our most substantial citizens, come forth here to give an example to the meaner sort."

"But what a trial to demand of them!"

"Yet 'tis said they undergo it with surprising cheerfulness. One might almost suspect the pretty minxes of enjoying it. Note the frills on their aprons, and the daintiness of their tuckers, and their profound ignorance of the swains staring close at hand. But come, I must take you away, lest you join the ranks to-morrow."

Agnes arrived at Marblehead early in the afternoon. Intent upon her errand, she took the nearest way from the wharf to her mother's cabin. Coming, at a street-crossing, upon a group of boys engaged in pitching pennies, she quietly skirted the crowd, and was about to pass on, scarce heeding their presence. Unhappily she was recognized by one of the number who had seen her at the funeral.

"Ther' go old Surrige's gal!" he shouted, pointing after her. "She thet run away wi' th' lor-rd. She 's a wicked one; she be in wi' the Devil, they say. See her! ther' she goes. Th' lor-rd ha' sent her home a-foot. Wher' be her gr-rond coach gone? Th' lor-rd ha' tur-rned her off, 'n' sent her home a-foot."

Only too easily aroused to mischief, the whole troop came shouting and hallooing after her.

"Look out, ther', she lays not her claw on ye! She 's a witch, they say."

"A witch! a witch!" cried the others, catching up the opprobrious name.

Failing to draw any retort from the object of their persecution, the malicious little wretches took courage to press upon and hustle her as she walked.

Hitherto affecting unconcern, Agnes was now filled with alarm, and looked about for aid. Full well

she knew the uselessness of appeal to her tormentors, whom once she would have boldly turned upon and with the first roadside weapon put to flight.

"Get back to town wi' ye! Go back, ye witch! We 'll ha' no evil ones her'! Fling her over-r th' r-rocks! Drive her into th' sea! Yah! yah! Go way, witch! Witch! witch! witch!"

Detecting the panic of their victim, one of the ringleaders flung an old shell he had picked out of the mire. The foul mark this left on Agnes's beautiful dress filled the whole group with delight. The next minute a shower of missiles — stones, shells, dead fishes, and any convenient offal from the gutter — rained down upon Agnes's head.

Terrified now beyond control, she took to flight. This was the last needed incentive to the young ruffians at her heels. With yells of triumph, they pursued like a pack of bloodhounds. Luckily, Agnes was now close upon the cove. Winged with fear, she succeeded in reaching her mother's door. Goody Surriage came out to discover the cause of the uproar just as the troop caught up with her gasping daughter. Swifter than thought the maternal instinct flamed up; and forgetful of age and rheumatism she rushed to the rescue.

Seizing the ringleader, who, little suspecting the unwasted vigor of the old fishwife's arm, had not heeded her approach, she belabored him with a broken oar until he roared for mercy. Then, turning upon the others with an energy of vituperation which drowned their puerile clamor, she routed and drove them from the cove.

Agnes spent several hours with her mother, and came away at length with various projects for the dame's relief in her mind, and the "Brown Claim" in her pocket.

Arrived in town, she handed the latter to Frankland, and heard nothing of it for several days. Sitting at her chamber-window one afternoon, she saw his coach coming from town much earlier than usual. She hurried down just as the horses came up at a dead run.

"Something has happened!"

Frankland sprang out and greeted her with affected composure, and indeed regarded her with a facetious look as he nodded in answer to her question.

"'T is ill news?"

"Not entirely," looking mysterious.

"What is it, then?" impatiently.

"You are going to England."

"I?"

"Yes, and take me with you."

Agnes turned white, and looked at him with startled eyes.

"'T is some one of yours!"

"No, no; put away your fears; 't is nothing. I am called to London on business. My late uncle, it is discovered, was fond of making wills. He has left an assortment behind him. He had lately married a new wife, — an imperious dame, — who took advantage of his dotage to procure a will in her favor, in which all the family estates which have been accumulated since the days of the great Protector have been made over to this grim Worcester-

shire spinster, — as late she was. I am called home to try the matter in the courts."

"And when are we to go?"

"Directly; a ship sails in two days."

"Then we need not go to the Commissary's party, after all," with a look of immense relief.

Bursting out laughing at such an unexpected cause for congratulation, Frankland said, —

"Then you are glad to go?"

"Yes; but —" with a look of dismay, "my mother! I cannot leave her."

"She is provided for."

"What mean you?" with a kindling look and rising color.

"I have bought the 'Brown Claim.'"

CHAPTER XXIX.

LONDON TOWN.

ARRIVED in London, after a long and stormy voyage, Frankland went with Agnes to his own house in Clarges Street, off Piccadilly, which chanced to be vacant.

On the way Agnes gazed about with interest and wonder at the street sights, — the tall buildings, the strange vehicles, the gorgeous signs with their grotesque emblems, — puzzling her wits as to why the "Fox" should ever have been married to the "Seven Stars," the "Bell" to the "Neat's Tongue," the "Dog" to the "Gridiron," or the "Hog" should have been put "in Armor."

Some of these oddities, Frankland explained, were due to perversion, which in the course of two or three generations had altered beyond recognition designs once significant and appropriate, as in the case of "The Satyr and the Bacchanals," changed by slow and insensible degrees into "The Devil and the Bag of Nails." Even he, however, failed to detect in "The Goat and Compasses" the sweet old Puritan assurance that "God Encompasseth Us."

But more strange and bewildering than these, indeed in some cases past all comprehension to Agnes, were the street cries which resounded on

every side and filled the air with infernal clamor: "Small coal!" "Crab! crab! any crab?" "Troope every one!" "Buy my singing-glasses!" "Old satten, old taffety and velvet!" "Buy a fork or a fire-shovel!" "Marking-stones!" "Hot baked wardens, hot!" "Cockles!" "Buy a fine bow-pot!" "A dip and a wallop for a bawbee!" "Curds and whey!" "A tormentor for your fleas, ma'am!" "Buy my wash balls!" "Fine tie, or a fine bob, sir!" "Hearts, liver, and lights!" "Saloop!" "Delicate cowcumbers to pickle!"

> "Three-rows-a-penny pins!
> Shorts, whites, and mid-dl-ings!"

For the rest, Agnes was surprised to find the streets not much wider than at home, and far more dirty. Foul water stood in the kennels, giving forth most unsavory odors, while the unpaved thoroughfares abounded in puddles through which saucy coachmen delighted to drive their ponderous wheels, splashing from head to foot any daintily dressed passer-by. Frankland accounted for the great number of bootblacks and street-sweepers by reluctantly confessing that in fair weather the air was filled with clouds of dust, and in wet weather the crossings were almost impassable for mud.

"And are these the streets the stately Mr. Addison used to traverse and talk so much about in the 'Spectator'?" Agnes cried out in astonishment.

"The very self-same; and much delight he found here, I can assure you."

"But 't is more like Mr. Gay's 'Trivia.'"

Frankland answered only by a confident smile, as if privy to a latent charm lurking behind the dirt and confusion which could be trusted to reveal itself in time.

Arrived at home, and the dust of travel shaken off, Frankland, with the instinct of a man of the world, made his first care a personal one in the matter of certain little points of conformity to their changed surroundings. Agnes must have a new hoop, less flaring in front and more at the sides; she must doff her old capuchin in favor of a new straw bonnet tied behind in her poll, with streamers down her back; she must have new gowns of lustring and taffeta for home wear, and satin and brocade for grander occasions; while he, pending the making of certain fine suits at the tailor's, bought a new brown bob periwig, and exchanged his old-fashioned triangular cocked-hat for a Kevenhüller with a spout in front.

Thus equipped he showed himself at White's and Brookes's, but found, to his surprise and disgust, instead of a throng of old friends and acquaintances, both places overrun with a herd of striplings, — mere saucy boys, as it seemed, fitter to be flogged and sent back to school. His own set had so nearly disappeared that he had much ado to find one or two among the crowd, and they indeed took but a languid interest in renewing an old acquaintance. The youths, meanwhile, how they chattered and bet and swore! what new tricks of dress they had, and what new quirks of speech! How easy the dogs were; withal, how occupied with themselves, and how little concerned with him!

He rubbed his eyes and looked about. Everywhere change, and all for the worse. Where was the dear, the grand old England of his youth, when Walpole was at the head of a cabinet of noble nobodies, when Pulteney and Carteret and Harley and Sandys and the obese and venal Bubb Doddington were in opposition? Where was the royal head of that opposition? Where was the Augustan age of English letters,—the London of Pope and Swift, of Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, of Gay and Lady Mary, and a host of lesser lights? Where was the drama of those halcyon days? What could be left to a stage which had lost Cibber, Quin, Anne Oldfield, and Mrs. Porter? Who was this ranting little revolutionist of a Scotchman at Drury Lane, whom the striplings were raving about, who had set at nought all tradition and propriety, — he and his Irish hoyden, Mrs. Woffington?

Although still only thirty-seven, Frankland confessed to Agnes on coming home that he felt like Methuselah, and almost persuaded himself into conformable gout and rheumatism. Despite, too, the unimpaired elegance of figure which there is good authority for believing he retained to the end of life, he felt, he said, as clumsy as a clodhopper. A century later, perhaps, he would have summed the whole case up in one word, and recognized with dismay that he had lost every vestige of his old-time *chic*.

Two prime consolations, however, among many others, were left him. In the first place, his old patron and friend, the Duke of Newcastle, was at the head of a government recently patched together out of the available remnants of "the broad-bottomed

coalition." In the next place, it turned out that another of his old friends had risen to the scarcely less distinguished position of autocrat in the club-world. He discovered it quite by accident one day at White's, when there took place a most unaccountable buzzing and fluttering among the striplings upon the entrance of a tallish, thin man with a ghastly white face.

"The great Mr. Selwyn!" went the whisper.

And so, sure enough, it was his own old acquaintance, George Selwyn,—fresh arrived, no doubt, from an execution or a charnel-house, — now grown to be the great wit of his day, the very prince of fine jesters, whom the striplings stood in such awe of that they were content with the crumbs that fell from his table. When, therefore, Frankland went and claimed acquaintance, and was cordially greeted, he became from that moment a man of mark. It was learned presently that he was a baronet, with a fortune in possession and another in expectancy; that he had a snug berth in the Civil Service; and that, moreover, he enjoyed the rare distinction of being descended from the Great Protector.

Frankland told Agnes of the meeting, and added in confidence, that, although gratified to find one of his contemporaries grown to so much consequence, yet to his own thinking Selwyn's great reputation was due rather to a grim undertaker's manner of saying things, and a trick with the whites of his eyes, than to supremacy of cleverness.

From Selwyn he had news of many of his old friends, and was glad to hear some excuse for Horace

Walpole's neglect, for he had begun to feel sore at receiving no welcoming visit or word from that old crony. But Horry, it seems, could hardly call his soul his own, what with the horde of guests yonder in his little box at Strawberry Hill, which he had converted into such a marvel of taste and elegance, according to Selwyn, as had made it the show-place of all England.

In all this time, let it be understood, Frankland was not neglecting his more serious interests. On the contrary, he had made it his first business to consult with his legal advisers and institute proceedings for the recovery of his inheritance. The belligerent dowager being moreover already on the spot eager to defend her rights, — or, more properly, conquests, — the fight promised to be close and bitter.

Pending the necessary time spent in preliminaries, Frankland took Agnes about to see the town. They went for a row upon the river, where they met much other gay company, and, to Agnes's indignation, were assailed with broad jokes, equivocal compliments, and coarsest raillery from passing boats; which not even the assurance that it was nothing more than the usual river license fully reconciled them to. Again, they went one evening to Drury Lane to see the new great actor in the new great tragedy of "Barbarossa." Agnes sat in one of the boxes, with crowds of dandies standing all about her upon the stage, obstructing the entrances, taking snuff, and showing off their finery. Suddenly out of their midst stalked, as it seemed straight towards her, a little figure covered with glittering tinsel, his big, blazing eyes fixed steadfastly

upon her. Throwing herself backward, she well-nigh shrieked with terror, and Frankland himself was so startled out of his prejudices as to mutter under breath, "Egad! 't is wonderful!" But the greatest sight was in reserve, — a masquerade at Ranelagh, which was as much a novelty to Frankland as to Agnes; for the place had been built during his absence in America. The garden opened at three o'clock in the afternoon; but having been warned that people of fashion did not arrive until later, they went at six, and found themselves in a vast enclosure with a rotunda in the midst, surrounded by an arcade containing booths for tea, for bric-a-brac, and others still for gaming-tables. Beyond was a mimic lake, upon which floated an island holding a pagoda, while here, there, and everywhere were malls shaded by beautiful trees. Upon the greensward were pitched numerous tents, and in one part a May-pole was set up, about which people were dancing to a pipe and tabor. Bands of music in all sorts of disguises were placed about, one being concealed in a gondola covered with streamers, which rowed back and forth on the lake. As night fell, the trees were hung with lamps, and the brilliantly illuminated rotunda resounded with music and the shuffling tread of dancing.

As no persuasion had availed to induce Agnes to put on a mask, which she stubbornly associated with some indefinable wickedness, they found themselves unpleasantly conspicuous, and, indeed, a butt for so many not very delicate jokes that they came away before midnight, although the revels, as they afterwards learned, were kept up until morning.

Arrived home, they found that Mr. Walpole had been to visit them, and left behind him a note, in which, after neatly lamenting their absence, he went on to beg his dear Harry and Madam, his soon- (he hoped) to-be friend, to waive further ceremony, and come to dine with him upon the morrow, where they would find for company the great Cu and two fair ladies of the neighborhood.

Upon some hint of declining from Agnes, Frankland showed so much disappointment that she forbore to press the matter, and it was decided they should go.

As Twickenham lay within easy reach of the city, they set out at their leisure next morning in a coach and four, and the roads being in good condition, reached the house before noon.

They were surprised to find, instead of a modern villa, as they had expected, something more resembling a little gingerbread castle, with suggestions of Gothic architecture in its toyish prettiness, yet on the whole vastly finical and without symmetry or consistency. Outside there was a lawn, with a grove and gardens, all variously embellished so that there remained only the sky and the expanded view which the busy owner had not perverted from its simplicity.

Mr. Walpole happened to be walking in the garden when they arrived, and came promptly to receive them, — a little man in a curling wig, with an oval forehead, a long nondescript nose, a flat upper lip, and a lurking look of mockery in his bright wide-apart eyes. He and Frankland regarded each other

with closest interest as they rapidly exchanged the commonplaces of greeting.

"But come, come, you shall go in," said their host, at last turning about and leading the way through a bow-window into a tiny parlor hung with a stone-colored Gothic paper, and some Venetian prints framed in a very ugly way, so that they had the effect of bas-reliefs.

Pointing out the Gothic effect of the walls, the little enthusiast drew them beneath some gloomy arches into the hall, and paused with the unconscious air of a showman to give time for any irrepressible bursts of rapture.

All was silence, however; for what they saw was so different from anything in their experience, that his visitors seemed unable to make up their minds on the moment.

"You may see how little I have to boast of, for this is the most particular and chief beauty of my castle," — with his ear cocked for a disclaimer.

"Ah! how extremely — humph! yes, 't is very fine!" said Frankland, in doubtful tones.

"Oh! nothing at all to talk of," with overdone depreciation and a little shrug.

"And yet all the world is talking of it. I 've heard of nothing else since I arrived."

"Yes, the clublings make a great chatter," twinkling away a look of satisfaction behind his eyelids; "and I will whisper you the cause of it, which is nothing more nor less than that public taste in this blessed realm is sunk to such a barbarous level — note, madam, pray, the wall painted in perspective

to represent Gothic fretwork — that any suggestion of real elegance comes as a revelation from heaven. Remark this balustrade, Sir Harry! how light it is! adorned with the antelopes, as you see, all quite in the Gothic manner."

"If there were but a thought more light," suggested his visitor.

"No, no!" with a shudder; "not another glimmer, for worlds. The obfuscation is studied; see! the windows are gloomed with those painted fat saints to shoulder out the garishness. There 's nothing of the sort in England. Madam, you 'll scarce credit it; I have in all thirty-two windows of painted glass in my little box."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Here, as you see, the vestibule opens with three arches upon the landing."

"And these niches?"

"Are filled with trophies, coats-of-mail, Indian shields, broadswords, quivers, long-bows, and spears, all said to have been taken by Sir Terry Robsart — you know our descent, Sir Harry — in the holy wars — "

He was interrupted by somebody at his elbow crying in a loud but not unmusical voice, —

"Lord, sir! and are these your manners, — to leave company to shift for themselves while you are explaining your outlandish curiosities?"

Walpole turned with a flush of pleasure to introduce the speaker, — a stout, middle-aged woman, with bold eyes and coarse features redeemed by a look of shrewdness and good-nature, as Mrs. Clive.

"Leave us now to become acquainted, sir, and

make haste to meet her ladyship, who I saw coming through the shrubbery."

Upon this hint the host hurried away, when the actress, turning to Agnes, said bluntly, —

"'T is well I arrived in time, madam; else, had he once got you upstairs, you might never have come off alive. 'T is endless, — the trash he has stored there; but come with me out of this dark hole, and I will show you something more worth while."

Leading the way back to the little parlor, she seated them in the bow-window and pointed out the view, with Twickenham on the one hand, Richmond on the other, the river winding below, and fine green meadows between.

As they sat thus, Walpole came back leading a tall, rather faded-looking woman, with soft features, a long neck, and quiet manners, whom he introduced as Lady Suffolk.

Agnes stared in astonishment to see both ladies without tuckers, and so very naked as to suggest that they had been interrupted in their toilet and come away half dressed.

Mr. Chute presently appeared, — a high-bred, dull-looking man, with a lean face and an aquiline nose; and dinner was announced.

Frankland, having attempted on the way out several fine speeches in Lady Suffolk's ear, discovered after a little that her ladyship was deaf, a fact made more evident in the course of the meal by a little side conversation between her and Mrs. Clive.

"What a beauty, madam! 'T is her own tint, too."

"Poh! Never tell me that."

"I swear to you!"

Lady Suffolk put up her glass and stared at Agnes, whose eyes were riveted upon her plate with a futile attempt at unconsciousness, the mounting color telling its own story upon cheek and forehead.

The dinner was enlivened by stories of Court life by Lady Suffolk, and racy stage anecdotes from Mrs. Clive, the host himself contributing a due share.

Among other sallies, he rallied Frankland on his lawsuit.

"How is your aunt, Sir Harry? Have you encountered the old dame yet? Egad! you'll find her a foe worthy your steel."

"You know her ladyship, then?"

"God forbid! Not I. I'm told old Marlborough was a lamb to her. A regular Xantippe, the terror of her own family, and now come to be the scourge of yours. You've heard her pet name?"

"No."

"Why, by those who have to do with her she is familiarly called 'the Devil.'"

"Behind her back?"

"I warrant you."

"You fill me with terror," said Frankland, laughing.

"And well I may," answered Walpole, delighted at having unearthed so promising a bit of gossip. "I tell you frankly I would n't give a fico for all you ever recover from her."

"I have hopes a jury of Englishmen will never see a family inheritance alienated from its proper course."

"Oh, for the landed estates, you may have them

back after she 's dead; but for the personal hereditaments, — all the plate, portraits, jewels, and memorials of the Great Protector, — I promise you she will burn them to ashes before one ever comes back to you, though Newgate stared her in the face."

"And she 's welcome, for all me. I fancy, all told, there 's nothing of much worth."

"Hear the man, Chute! Hear him, ladies! Why, sir, the old hag has in her clutches the Frankland Cooper!"

"And what, pray, is that?"

"Eh?" cried the amazed virtuoso, breathlessly.

"Good God, sir! you have lost credit forever in this house!" said Lady Suffolk, tranquilly.

Agnes, not yet quite accustomed to elegant society, started at the oath.

"But to come back to the point," said Frankland.

"And are you serious? you cannot be such a d——d ignoramus!"

"I assure you."

"Tell him, your ladyship, while I get back my breath!"

"Why, sir, 't is a miniature portrait of Cromwell, done by the famous Cooper. The story goes that the Protector came one day unexpectedly into the artist's cabinet, while he was engaged upon the portrait, and caught him making a copy; whereupon he snatched the original and carried it off in high dudgeon."

"And this is now in the possession of my aunt?"

"Ay, is it," broke in Walpole, "after having come down to you from old Oliver himself! 'T is a very

gem, too, and well known to collectors; indeed, in corroboration of Lady Suffolk's story, you may see the armor in the picture is unfinished. The old griffin sets great store by it, I assure you; 't is guarded more jealously than the crown jewels. Chute shall relate the circumstance of seeing it once in company with Bentley. Come, Cu!"

"Why," began Chute, in a dry and formal tone very different from his friend's, "having gone in full dress, as we had a hint we must, to her ladyship's town residence, Hollis Street, Cavendish Square, we were received with much ceremony and ushered up to her bedroom, where she sat propped up in great grandeur, being ill at the time, in a yellow satin nightgown, and blazing with all the family jewels. The family coach, with attendants in livery, was thereupon despatched to the bankers, where the miniature was deposited for safe keeping, and it was brought in great state and exposed to our homage. Then, after we had satisfied our curiosity and exhausted our raptures, it was conveyed back again with the like ceremony."

After dinner the guests were taken to the garden to see the sights, — the rare plants, the fountain, the Chinese summer-house, and the antique shrine sent from Italy by Sir Horace Mann.

"Yonder," said Walpole, pointing to a roof just peeping from behind the grove, "is Cliveden!"

"My own bit of a box," explained Mrs. Clive, with a soubrette dip; "and here, see, is the path leading to it with a name of its own, like a street in town: and what, think you, but Drury Lane?"

The coach was presently announced, and Agnes went to put on her bonnet.

"Egad! Sir Harry," cried Walpole, looking after her in admiration, "my heart is quite gone to this radiant creature of yours, — she is a very paragon. Introduce her at Court, and she would be the toast of the town in a fortnight."

"Or upon the boards either," piped up Mrs. Clive. "What would not little Davy give for such a face and figure!"

"But you will never persuade me," added her ladyship, "that a creature with such elegance and propriety of deportment was bred up in the wilderness."

The chorus was interrupted by Agnes's reappearance upon the steps, when Walpole hastened forward to hand her into the coach.

Frankland set out for home evidently delighted with his visit. "You see now, my dear, the effect of getting out of that hot-bed of bigotry we have been living in, and into the company of men and women of the world."

Agnes did not speak, but seemed to ponder the remark.

"You have to-day been received, and with the greatest honor and respect, in one of the first households in the kingdom."

"And those ladies — "

Agnes stopped. Frankland gazed at her searchingly. "Why did you stop? What did you mean by that look?"

"Indeed, I do not know."

"Poh! You are dissembling."

"You know I cannot dissemble. I tell you the simple truth; 't is beyond my power to unravel the strange medley of thoughts and emotions I have had to-day."

"But you surely know your feelings upon your reception."

"I have but one feeling or wish in the matter."

"And that?"

"That you should be satisfied."

"'T is idle to talk so; you must experience different emotions from respectful and contemptuous treatment."

"I do not know; I am tired thinking upon it. I am not sure I should not prefer merited contumely to undeserved respect. But 't is out of my power to control. I must accept what comes; it makes little difference now, it can make none in the end."

She spoke quietly and without bitterness, in a voice strong with the calmness of resignation.

Frankland felt himself disarmed by it.

"My dear child," he said, with softened manner, "you will have no more ill-treatment to endure. I can answer for my friends; I can answer for the people here. We shall live henceforward in another world, — a world, as you will find, big enough for all to breathe in after their own manner."

CHAPTER XXX.

"FACE TO FACE."

THE suit of *Frankland* vs. *Frankland* duly came on for trial before the Court of King's Bench, and a brief account of the proceedings was published in the forthcoming "Gentleman's Magazine." From this abridged report it appears that Sir Harry prevailed in the matter so far as to have the will set aside and a reversion of the property adjudged to him upon the death of the dowager, who was, moreover, condemned to pay all the costs of court.

Life in London, meanwhile, was fast spoiling Frankland for a return to America. The disaffection had, indeed, set in from the moment he came within sound of Bow Bells, and continued every moment to increase. Soon after his coming, therefore, he had let it be known to friends influential with the Government that he should not be averse to a change; and now that his business was done, and a prospect of return stared him in the face, he took the bolder step of making a formal application to be transferred to some corresponding position upon the Continent.

While awaiting official action upon this petition, he one day received a letter from his mother, saying that with his two unmarried sisters she was on the point of setting out from Mattersea, the family seat

in Nottinghamshire, to come to her house in town, where they were all looking forward with the greatest eagerness to a reunion with him; that meantime, however, they must stop on the way at Denbigh, where some pressing family affairs would detain them for several weeks.

He brought this home and read it to Agnes.

"They are coming here!" she repeated, blankly.

"'Here'! Oh, no; to their own house."

Notwithstanding this assurance, she mused over the intelligence with a troubled face.

He did not heed her; he was thinking. All at once he started up with a shout: —

"Why should n't we? We will. Egad, we will! My dear, I have a notion."

Agnes shook off her abstraction to listen.

"Capital! Yes, yes! Nothing could be easier. We will do it, I say. We will go to Mattersea!"

He stopped, and laughed aloud at her look of dismay.

"They'll be gone, you understand,—all gone; the coast will be clear — only one or two old servants to whom any explanation will do — "

Agnes checked his enthusiasm by shaking her head emphatically.

"Eh? What now?"

"And do you think I would do that?"

"Do what, pray?"

"Go to their house by stealth, and in their absence?"

"'Their house!' — what the deuce, my dear! — 'Their house'! 'T is my house! my own — 't is an

entail. I am the head of the family; my mother occupies the house in my absence by my sufferance."

Agnes still shook her head. "Go you," she said, "and leave me behind!"

His face fell. He was silent for a space, and said at length in a tone of controlled irritation: —

"Stay, then, if you will!"

"You are angry with me, Frankland."

"I had hoped you were cured of these foolish qualms, since getting out of yonder mole's nest of bigotry."

"I cannot help my feelings; I can only pray for strength to control them," she answered patiently; "but in this matter I am not alone concerned."

He sat nursing his chagrin, and did not speak.

"My going thither will be a needless affront to your family."

"It need never be discovered."

"But will none the less be an underhanded and unworthy action in me."

"How then! Have I not a right to go to my own house when 't is empty, and take whom I choose — But say no more! I will press you no further."

"You need not," she answered resignedly, "since I am resolved to go. I only thought — 't is excusable, I hope, to beg you will show some small consideration for the feelings of others, even if — "

She needed not to finish the sentence. Her meaning was only too clear. He sprang to detain her as she turned to leave the room.

"Agnes, hearken a moment! It has been one of my most cherished wishes in bringing you hither to

take you to the home of my boyhood, to show you the scenes of our early sports, to go with you to all the places I have talked so much about, and live it over with you upon the spot. I have said nothing of it before, but I have had it steadily in view from the beginning. I have constantly thought and dreamt of it, awaiting with impatience an opportunity to carry it into effect. Behold here the opportunity ready made to our hands! My business here is done; my family will not arrive for several weeks. I can make no plan as to my future movements until I have an answer from the Government. I have nothing to do meantime but stand idly here sucking my thumbs. Suddenly comes the news that the house is vacant — My dear, do you see what a grievous disappointment — "

"I will go, I say."

He folded her in his arms, and the discussion ended in a conventional way.

The preparation for so long a journey was no light matter, but, set about with vigor, was soon concluded. The heavy, lumbering travelling-coach having been thoroughly overhauled and put in repair, was loaded down with piles of superfluous luggage without and innumerable needed and needless comforts within. At last, with the coachman armed to the teeth upon the box, the footman and valet quaking upon the rumble, the maid and bandboxes crowded in with themselves, they set forth, attended for the first half-score miles by a mounted escort as a guard against the highwaymen who infested every turnpike leading from the city.

To Agnes, whose journeys at home had been for the most part through the wilderness, this spectacle of a whole countryside under cultivation was a revelation. She beheld with speechless delight, framed in the coach-window, picture after picture of waving wheat-fields, flourishing orchards, blooming hedgerows, quaint villages, noble parks, stately cathedrals, turreted castles. All bespoke a land inhabited for centuries, an atmosphere breathing of antiquity and historic prestige, of wealth and power, national glory and private renown. It produced, too, another impression: an uncomfortable and belittling one, of personal insignificance, — a feeling, as she described it to Frankland, as if she herself had been born but yesterday, a child of nowhere and nothingness, and had no place amid such surroundings.

Frankland, on the contrary, reviving every moment fresh reminiscences of childhood, felt more and more akin with his environment. Intent upon making Agnes share his enthusiasm, he pointed out, with brief scraps of history or tradition, the more picturesque and noted landmarks. Now it was the distant peaks of Chilton Hills, now the tranquil Ouse zigzagging its slow way across the fertile plains of Bedfordshire, again the dark mass of Rockingham Forest looming far to the left over the gentle downs of Northampton, or, more imposing than all, the ancient pile of Peterborough Cathedral uprising in their very path.

Here, as it chanced, they stopped for the night, and Agnes spent all her waking hours at the Cathedral, gazing awe-struck upon the grand façade with its forest of turrets, spires, and pinnacles, or wander-

ing with bated breath amid the solemn glories of the interior.

Continuing their way early next day, they crossed the little river Welland, and rolled on over the Kesteven moors, watching the morning mists uprise like ghosts from the far-off Lincoln fens.

Arrived in Nottinghamshire, familiar objects greeted Frankland's eager eye on every hand, and Agnes noted with surprise his steadily increasing agitation as they advanced amid scenes of which she had so often heard him speak with indifference.

At Newark, while their horses were baiting, they walked down upon the great bridge which spans the Trent.

"Here, my dear, is one of the three great rivers of England!"

"'Great!'" repeated Agnes, depreciatingly; "'t is not, however, so big as our own Charles," she concluded, with a calculating eye.

"Poh, poh, little patriot! The Boston river is all mouth, like a good many of the noisy praying hypocrites on its banks; this river is more considerable and far deeper."

Passing through Carlton, Tuxford, East and West Retford, they approached, with nightfall, the little hamlet of Mattersea, in the Hatfield division of the wapentake of Bassetlaw, on the south bank of the Idle.

"See! — do you see, my dear," cried Frankland, scarcely able to keep his seat, "that dark line yonder on the western horizon? That is the famous Forest of Sherwood. Ah, now we are getting nearer; here

is Hayton Castle, not a stone changed; farther on is Blackaw Hill; we 'll climb it together, you and I. This stretch nearer at hand is Barnby Moor, and yonder is Torworth Grange. But, stay; there is something more curious: do you see a great ridge in the distance overgrown with ivy and a tangle of shrubbery? That is the remains of a Roman road one thousand — fifteen hundred, nearly two thousand years old. Heigh-ho! it seems but yesterday I saw it last. Ah, here we are at Stone Hill; and look! look! yonder is the village! A few minutes more and you may see the oaks and sycamores in our own park."

Filled with the home-returning feeling, Frankland gazed about him in a transport, without a thought of Agnes's state of mind. His attention was presently drawn to her in an unexpected manner.

"Here is an inn!" she cried, suddenly clutching his arm.

"Yes, the village inn," he said carelessly.

"Let us stop!"

"'Stop'!" He turned, and discovered with amazement her panic-stricken face.

"I want to get out. I want to stop here. I cannot go on with you!"

Puzzled at so sudden a consternation, Frankland hesitated.

"Put me down, I pray you. You need not stop a minute; I can take care of myself. Go, and do not hasten your visit! Stay yonder as long as you like. I shall be content, I shall be patient, I will wait for you here."

"Why! why! why! What sudden whimsy is

this?" said Frankland, laughing aloud, but with a forced effect.

"Stop the coach, I beg!"

"I will do nothing of the sort. Don't be a goose, love! We have settled it all once that you're to go. You will have me at your side; what do you fear?"

"Do not ask me! Do not argue about it!"

"But I will argue upon it. You shall not be so silly. What should you fear? Is it not my own house, when all is said and done? Come, come, my dear," embracing her; "have done now with such childishness, and trust to me!"

His words and manner had a due effect. Agnes made no further remonstrance, but sat for some minutes in silence, evidently fighting a little battle with herself. That she came off with no very signal victory was shown by the uncertain tone in which she vetoed Frankland's suggestion to stop if she were still unwilling to go on.

Meantime the coach had been making progress and was now rolling up the avenue. Agnes was too much agitated to note details. She was only conscious of stopping before an open door, of seeing Frankland alighted and shaking hands with a gray-haired old butler, of seeing the servants flying to and fro with the luggage, of finding herself mounting the stone steps into a spacious hall and following on into a reception-room where, to her bewilderment, she beheld Frankland in the embrace of a venerable matron who sobbed with joy as she clasped him to her bosom, and of two young women, both of whom gave evidence of the liveliest emotion.

Dazed and neglected, she stood in the midst of the confusion, servants running to and fro, doors slamming, dogs barking, and these strange people laughing and weeping over Frankland.

As soon as they released him he turned to look for her. She stood waiting near the door. He made a shambling, confused movement to go to her, but checked himself. He turned the other way and then back again; he glared at the floor while big drops of sweat stood upon his forehead. Overwhelmed with the situation, he had lost all control of himself. There was a terrible silence in the room.

Agnes lived long years in the pause, — years freighted with moral experience.

Frankland rose slowly to the occasion. The man was shaken to his centre. Summoning all his resources of courage and firmness, it was at last with unsettled voice and composure that he spoke.

"Mamma, my friend Miss Surriage. Agnes, my sisters, Miss Frances, Miss Mary."

A breeze straight from an iceberg came sweeping through the summer air. Mrs. Frankland, as if every drop of blood had congealed in her veins, courtesied from a freezing distance. She did not move from her place, but folding her withered hands above her girdle, fixed her dimmed eyes upon the stranger with annihilating disfavor. Her two daughters upon either hand dropped their eyes to the floor and stood motionless.

There was a distressing pause; Frankland's face flushed.

"Madam," he cried in an appealing tone, "is this your reception of my dearest friend?"

"We had no warning that we were to be honored by — by such a guest," faltered the matron, huskily.

But the son did not hear; his eyes were turned anxiously upon Agnes, who with a white face and eyes staring upon vacancy began to sway with a reeling motion.

"Madam, sisters, 't is inhuman! See, she is in a faint!"

The two young ladies started impulsively forward, but the mother put out her trembling hands with a restraining gesture: —

"Jenkins — the housekeeper, the servants; the bell is at your hand, Charles!"

Seizing Agnes about the waist, Frankland pulled the bell violently; but directly Agnes, as if by sheer force of will, recovered energy to disengage herself from his grasp, and said faintly: —

"I will go away."

"No, you shall not. Madam, I say — ladies, for shame! You shall not be thrust forth. I myself will bid you welcome to the shelter of my own roof. Be calm, my dear; have no fear! I will see that you have honorable treatment."

At this moment a servant entered in answer to the bell.

"Go bid the housekeeper make ready the best chamber in the house for this lady's use, and have her luggage taken up without delay!"

"Since you have assumed control of the household, my son, your sisters and I will withdraw," said

his mother, in a voice trembling with pride and resentment.

"We will relieve you of the necessity," retorted Frankland sharply, and followed Agnes into the hall.

There she sank upon a bench against the wall, and he strode hotly up and down. Presently, as he approached, she made a movement to speak.

"No, no; I know what you would say. Nothing can excuse such an affront. A reception like this after all these years! An indignity, an outrage, put upon me in my own house!"

Seeing the uselessness of remonstrance, Agnes waited for his anger to cool. Suddenly he came and knelt by her side: —

"Pardon,— pardon me, dear, for this needless trial I have brought upon you. You were in the right to stay away."

"But now we are both in the wrong."

"How in the wrong?" flaming up again.

"By staying here a moment longer. Let me go, then, I beg, before any greater harm is done!"

"No, by God! that you shall not!" he cried violently. "If you quit this house, I go with you, and never to return!"

She had never seen him so aroused, and was very much shocked, but none the less intent upon being heard.

"Listen to me but a moment, Frankland," she began, with a calmness proportioned to his excitement. "I beg you but to look at the other side of this matter. Think of the case of these ladies."

He repressed a movement of impatience.

"'T is plain ill accounts of me have reached them — no doubt made worse to their ears. There was no need; the truth was enough to justify their conduct."

"This is the old strain; I will hear no more of it!" he interrupted angrily.

"Their conduct, I say, is justified," she went on firmly. "I do not accept their treatment as an affront."

"But it is an affront, however you accept it. You are growing of late into a habit of submitting too tamely to such indignities."

A sudden light came and went in her face like the flash of a candle behind a darkened window. Frankland noted the effect, and looked profoundly rebuked.

Perceiving this, perhaps, she went on in a gentler tone: —

"Why should I be the cause of embroiling you with your family? Let me go away, then, quietly and at once."

"Go, then; go now! go at once!" he cried passionately; "but it shall be in my company!" And springing to his feet, he hurried away as if to carry his sudden purpose into effect.

Repressing a vague movement to follow him, Agnes sat reviewing the situation with a look of utter doubt and distress. What was left her to do? The responsibility for any happy and peaceable issue of the matter seemed to rest with her. She showed no attempt to shirk it, but spent, however, some minutes of anxious thought in making up her mind. Presently, clearing her face of trouble, she turned with

a firm step to the reception-room. Mrs. Frankland was seated in a chair by the table with her daughters upon either hand, engaged in an excited parley. She half rose from her seat, and flushed with anger at sight of Agnes entering the room alone and unbidden.

The latter, however, was not driven from her purpose by this unpromising reception.

"Madam," she began very quietly, "I wish to crave your pardon for this unwarranted intrusion into your household. I grieve for the pain it has cost you, and I beg to assure you that I am not here of my own will."

The matron turned away her face, pale and rigid as a mask in its pride and aversion, and fixed her eyes upon the opposite wall. The two young women, however, gazed with an irresistible fascination upon the stranger, who calmly and with an air curiously mingled of dignity and humility went on: —

"For your want of charity to me, 't is a matter between God and your own heart. I owe you no grudge for it. I make no claim to any consideration at your hands. I come to you now, that you may be spared further pain. I would have left your house at once. Your son would not suffer I should go alone; he will go with me, and threatens in such case never to return."

The mother started from her pose of inflexibility and regarded Agnes with a look of consternation.

"Oh, madam, I should be forever wretched to know myself the cause of such a breach between you. Indeed, I cannot bear the thought of it. If, then, it

proves there is no resource but that I should stay, I wish only to explain 't is under compulsion, and to assure you 't will be for the briefest possible space; and that in the mean time I neither expect nor will consent to receive any attention at your hands."

Before the astonished matron could gather herself for a reply, Agnes had returned to the hall. There she met Frankland, hat in hand, giving directions to his valet. He stared to see her come from the reception-room.

"'T is all settled!" she said, going quickly forward.

"Eh?"

"I have been speaking with Mrs. Frankland. It is understood between us that I am to remain. Ask me nothing further. Go in now and see her. I make only one request, — that my name shall not be mentioned between you."

She turned and went upstairs in the direction she had seen the servant disappear with her luggage. Frankland, after a moment's hesitation, went in to see his mother and sisters.

They had a long interview. He did not tell Agnes the result, but only explained that the unexpected presence of his family in the house was due to an accident which had delayed their departure. He added that some business between him and his mother would keep him over the following day.

Meantime, despite all remonstrances on her part, he ate his meals and spent most of his time with Agnes. Next morning, after another long interview with his family, he came back to her again, and with much ado coaxed her out for an airing. When near

the park gate they were met by a coach drawn by six horses just turning into the avenue.

There was a cry of joy from the coach-window, and Frankland ran forward. The lady within embraced him again and again in the most affectionate manner, and flooded him with questions.

"But who is with you? I wondered as you came down the avenue, first supposing 't was Fanny or Molly, grown taller in my absence; but where is she vanished?" exclaimed the lively lady, putting her head out to gaze at Agnes, who stood a little withdrawn and looking in another direction.

"'T is a friend of my own from America," said Frankland, in some confusion.

"Indeed! — and visiting at the house?"

But Frankland's head was turned, and he did not see the fleeting look of inquiry, nor choose to hear the question.

"Heavens! What beauty! See, my lord! But I know not if it be safe to give you a glimpse of such loveliness. Pray present us, Harry."

Frankland hesitated, but seeing no escape, complied.

"Miss Surriage, my sister Lady Chichester; Lord Chichester."

"I count myself happy to know you, madam; we shall become better acquainted before the day is out, I hope," said the Countess, graciously.

Agnes gravely courtesied, without returning either the smile or greeting.

"A proud puss, your friend," whispered the lady, tapping her brother upon the shoulder; "but make

haste back from your walk, for I have such a deal to say, and you have to make acquaintance with your new brother here, who has come to take you to visit us."

Frankland went back to Agnes with a beaming face.

"'T is my sister Anne; she has more sense and wit than all the rest. I told you of her marriage, remember, before we left Boston. She has a peer for a husband, and deserves her good fortune."

Mindful of his sister's injunction, Frankland abridged their walk. They were gone scarcely an hour. On the way to their rooms they by chance met my Lady Chichester upon the stairs. The lapse of sixty minutes had, it seemed, effected a great change in her ladyship's mood.

"You see, Anne, I 'm still a man of my word!" cried Frankland, gayly.

Her ladyship returned no answer. Gathering up her rustling dinner-robe, distended by a flaring hoop, she passed on without a word or look of recognition.

Frankland turned as if to call after, but, unable to articulate for rage, rushed off to his own room and paced the floor with suppressed fury.

Happily, at this juncture came a distraction, — a packet just arrived by post, bearing the Government seal. He opened it and read it once or twice through before his thoughts were sufficiently collected to digest the contents. It proved to be a foreign appointment. Perhaps no more effective sedative to his injured feelings could have been devised.

After pondering it for a while he took it to Agnes.

"It shall be my excuse for quitting this place within the hour," he cried, with a sudden look of exultation. "They shall not have the satisfaction to suppose they have driven us away with their black looks. Call your maid, darling, and pack up directly."

Without waiting for objection or remonstrance, he hurried away to push on his own preparations. Within two hours the carriage was at the door. Not even a servant came to wish them godspeed as they rolled away.

Throwing himself back in the carriage with a sigh of relief, Frankland was silent until they were clear of the village, when he suddenly called out to the driver to take the next turn to the north. Agnes looked surprised.

"There 's no such pressing haste to reach London now that we are clear of yonder place," he said in explanation. "This business of the packet can await our leisure. A part of my plan in coming north, my dear, which I have been keeping as a surprise for you, was to see the estate of which I have just recovered the reversion."

"Thirkleby?"

"Yes."

"And you have never seen it?"

"Never; and as it lies only a day's journey to the northward, and as her Infernal Majesty the present owner is at present digesting her late defeat in London, why, we may get a peep of it, and no one ever the wiser. Only the outside, my dear," he added, noting the alarm in Agnes's face; "have no fear

that I shall venture to cross the threshold. This experience will suffice me for a while."

Busied with natural reflections over the unhappy issue of his visit home, upon which he had fondly formed such different expectations, Frankland passed the day in moody silence. To Agnes the journey was illuminated by an unexpected and glorious vision, — the minster at York. Even Frankland was diverted for the moment from his own bitter reflections by her ingenuous wonder and fresh enthusiasm.

It was nearly dark when they reached Thirsk, and too late that day to visit Thirkleby Hall. After supper at the inn Frankland fell into talk with the landlord and a group of gossips, with the purpose of making some guarded inquiries about the condition and management of the estate. Agnes, left to herself, wandered through the village to the fine old church, where she stood watching the shadows gather about the massive tower until the clock beneath the Gothic window tolling curfew warned her home.

Next morning they drove to the Hall. Frankland stopped the coach when they were within full and unobstructed view of it, and gazed with profound interest upon the home of his ancestors and his own future patrimony, — a large, imposing mansion, with an apsidal bay and a portico in antis, built in the style of the Grecian renaissance, in anticipation of the memorable publications of Stuart and Revett, which were destined to revive the spirit of classicism all over the kingdom.

Frankland sighed as he turned away, perhaps with some mysterious premonition of the truth that he

was destined never to look upon those stately walls again. All the journey backward, too, he was silent and absorbed, and only when in the immediate neighborhood of London recovered his cheerfulness.

There, after due consultation with the Government, it was determined that he should be allowed some months to spend in travel before settling down in his new position.

Several busy weeks passed in preparation; when at last, having effected arrangements for the management of his affairs in America, and committed his English interests to the guidance of trustworthy hands, he set out with Agnes for a prolonged tour upon the Continent.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A GAY CAPITAL.

April 7.	Returned . . . to Lisbon.		
" 8.	Paid perruque-maker for combing wigs for 3 months		7200
" "	For boy 240 — Charges at Panada 480 . . .		720
" "	For chaise hire 5400, chaise man 400 . . .		5800
" "	For singing man 480; Mr Horne's servant 480		960
" 9.	Went to Opera.		
" "	To milkman at 40 rea per pint		1080
" 11.	To putting a new glass to the chaise . . .		3200
" "	Paid baker 32 loaves		1280
" "	For borders 3 feet wide Persian ranunculus, paracelsus, jonquils, red Turkey, yellow do. belladonna, lily.		
" 16.	To Jacinta		480
" 22.	To Jacinta 6400. To Bacchus and Hannah .		1600
" 27.	Went to the Opera.		

This page from an old memorandum-book dated 1755, and written in his own hand, shows that early in the spring following their departure from England — the winter, doubtless, having been spent in travelling — Frankland was fairly settled in his new position at the Portuguese capital.

From a careful study of these extracts, it further appears that he had already set up a household of his own, in which the two slaves Bacchus and Hannah, brought from Hopkinton, were reinforced

by divers native servants; that he still indulged his old taste for gardening, as well as a certain other old taste, in which, we may be sure, Agnes shared his enthusiasm (for the Lisbon opera was then accounted the best in all Europe); and that, in fine, he was living after a free, open-handed, not to say extravagant fashion.

But let it be remembered, in extenuation, that the Lisbon of that day was not a place wherein to practise economy. On the contrary, its idle, pleasure-loving populace, borne along on the flood-tide of national prosperity, rioted in luxury. The stream of gold which flowed into the royal coffers from South American mines was flung forth again with lavish prodigality. Incidentally, domestic industries were fostered, foreign trade increased, and Lisbon ranked, for the moment, with the richest and most flourishing cities in the world.

Among other evidences of commercial enterprise was a reciprocity treaty with England, dating back to the time of Queen Anne, by which somebody in that dull lady's name shrewdly agreed to forego the duties upon Portuguese wines in consideration of the free entrance granted to British wool. The result was an influx of English to the Portuguese capital, where they presently set up a church, a fine factory with a banqueting-hall overhead, and had even progressed to having a cemetery of their own.

Recommended by his rank, wealth, Government position, and divers accomplishments, Frankland was received with open arms by this little colony of his countrymen. A sufficiently gay circle it proved, its

cool British blood fired with contagion from the world without.

The world without, be it said, reeked with contagion, and all from one prolific plague-spot. Compounded of a thousand traits and tendencies predetermined and perfected for that hour and function, Dom José I. was born for the sceptre he wielded. Aside from the accident of birth, his comely, sensual face, with its arching brows, languid eyes, full lips, and soft, curving chin, proclaimed him of a type most fit to preside with easy grace over a dissolute and luxurious court. Well, too, it may have been for Portugal that such engrossing cares prevented any intermeddling with the real conduct of affairs reposed in the masterful hands of Pombal.

The business of getting their household in order, adapting their habits to changed surroundings, and returning visits of ceremony, so occupied the early months of their stay in Lisbon that Agnes and Frankland had little chance for sight-seeing. An old acquaintance from New England it was who one day persuaded them to climb to the Castle of St. George, where they had their first bird's-eye view of the city.

"Why, 't is worse than Marblehead for disorder," cried Frankland; "eh, Agnes? 't is, I swear!"

"Where be the seven hills?" asked Agnes, in equal surprise.

"All in the mind's eye, madam," answered Mr. Farmer, their guide; "yet not quite all, either: take away five, and you have it. See! if you like, I will give you the plan of the city in a nutshell?"

"Do, sir!"

"'T is simply, then, a valley betwixt two hills: this where we stand and the one opposite. That yonder, as you may see, holds the most splendid buildings, — the Palace of Braganza, the Inquisition, — that gloomy building beyond, — the Hospital, St. Dominick, India House, St. Francisco, the Esperanza, St. Vincent, etc."

"And where is the royal palace?"

"Here, at this end of the valley. See it yonder close upon the river's bank, with the gardens and great square in front! Next beyond is the quay, — the pride of the city. There 's not such another in Europe. Along in the valley below us lie the principal streets, and at the other end is the *Rocio*."

"A building?"

"No; the great square yonder, where they hold their markets and fairs. So there is the town for you!"

"And all as plain as day. Farmer, I suspect you of having served an apprenticeship at this business!"

"Why, so I have, by dragging sundry wheezy and asthmatic countrymen of yours up the slope, but have generally earned their gratitude for my pains."

"And so you have ours; but plunge us now still further in your debt," said Frankland, lazily, "by pointing out which of all this deserves a closer study!"

"Why, first and foremost, by all odds, the aqueduct, — the greatest construction of modern times."

"Yes, to be sure; we 've heard of that."

"Then the quay, — already mentioned, — the churches — "

"Oh, I am sure not to escape those," interrupted Frankland, laughing.

"And when the city is exhausted, the greatest sight of all is yet in store for you."

"Outside the town?"

"Yes; at Cintra."

"And what is there?"

"For Nature, the valley of Colares, which is quite beyond compare; and for art, the great Monastery of Mafra, which — but I will not enlarge; words, after all, can give you but a feeble notion, and only serve to take off the gloss."

"In what direction is this marvel?"

"Twenty miles or so westward, towards the coast."

"So, my dear, there is work in store for us, I see," said Frankland, as they came down the hill. "We must shake off these social fetters and give ourselves to Nature."

Arrived home, however, they found new social fetters awaiting them in the form of invitations to a ball at the palace.

"Humph! we are in luck," said Frankland, studying the royal crest upon the seal with a gratified look, and forgetting his late resolution. "'T is to be a grand affair; I 've heard of it buzzing about town these some days, and there is great heart-burning among the neglected. You must have some fine new duds for this, girl!"

Agnes showed no delight at the prospect, neither, on the other hand, did she betray any panic. The

months passed since leaving England had plainly been months of experience. There was something of it written in her face. The old look of resignation which had once been but a visitor, had now become a tenant, and with it domiciled a haunting suggestion of sadness, which she seemed ever busied in detecting and vigorously driving forth.

Frankland, too, in the mean time had gained something — or was it a loss? There was indubitably a change in him, not to be so definitely placed or strictly defined, — something, perhaps, to be felt rather than put into words. It was not that his dress was gayer, his manner freer, and his talk more richly garnished with oaths; it was rather an impression, gathered cumulatively from air, talk, and manner, that he had made up with tenfold interest all he had ever lost in the wilds of America. Clearly, now he would have had no trouble in outfacing the striplings at White's.

The ball fulfilled its promise; it was very brilliant. The flower of all the gay capital afforded in rank, wealth, and fashion was there, and blazing in the midst, outshining Solomon in glory of apparel, the royal host. Surrounded by a crowd of courtiers only less splendid than himself, his Majesty most graciously received the thronging procession. With a ready memory for titles, ranks, and claims to favor, he dexterously varied his form of greeting to suit the individual. With a discriminating eye, too, for female beauty, he suffered no fresh or pretty face to pass without compliment, sometimes bold and outspoken, or again more significantly whispered, varying the monotony of the reception by an occasional satirical

aside to his admiring courtiers upon any marked personality in the obsequious crowd bowing before him.

"Who is that strange-looking man with the long narrow eyes, and a nose like a hawk's beak?" whispered Agnes to Frankland as they stood apart after being received.

"Where?"

"Yonder, standing by the pillar; a man is talking to him whom he does not heed. See how curiously he regards the King, and with what a sneering lip looks about upon the people. There! Look now! He turns this way, — he that wears the order with the Maltese cross."

"Ha! you may well ask."

"And why?"

"That is the Richelieu of Portugal, — the greatest man in the kingdom."

"Pombal?"

"Yes; and well thought on. I have something to say to him. He is not listening to yonder fool, and I could not have a better opportunity. I will come back to you as soon as may be!"

Left to herself, Agnes recognized among the throng many of her new acquaintance of the English colony. Of them, the better class — the mercantile — was lacking. Those present were the fashionable sort, and a motley set they were, — scheming Jacobites, amateur diplomatists, titled gamblers, hungry-looking men of letters, and a plentiful sprinkling of rakes of both sexes.

It was one of these latter who, to Agnes's consternation, suddenly came towards her with a look

of recognition, — a lively dame, with a vast expanse of bare bosom, a painted face, and a monstrous hoop.

"Good God, madam, what is your secret? Here are you scarcely arrived, and have already engaged the eye of the King himself!"

Agnes started, and looked alarmed. The other laughed aloud.

"Brava! that start was perfection. A great comedian was lost in you! Ah, sly puss! but you 'll have need of all your cunning, for his Majesty is a capricious wooer."

"Be pleased, madam, to bestow your conversation in a quarter where it will be more welcome!" answered Agnes, in high dudgeon.

"Tut, tut! what a firebrand. I meant no offence, dear creature! Come, now, pocket your wrath, and admit me of your counsel! If I lack your art, I am not quite without some small skill in such matters!"

Glaring with frowning eyes upon the offender, Agnes made no answer. The other, nothing daunted, with a cool wink of innuendo went on, —

> "'Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
> Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?'

Ah! how dear Pope lends us the fitting word at every turn. But since your spleen is so kicked up, I 'll tease you no more. Only bear in mind you may call upon me at need! And so — your most obedient humble servant, madam!" — settling down with a mock courtesy into her hoops as into a barrel.

Complaining of this experience to Frankland, Agnes only provoked a laugh.

"Poh, my dear! You were only baited with a little harmless raillery, and must needs go swallowing the hook. Lady Betty is thought something of a wit, and would be practising. She meant, I dare swear, but to pay you a fine compliment, and gave it this ingenious turn; though, indeed, for the matter of that, how his Majesty could have overlooked — "

"Come, sir!"

"Why, then, come, madam; let us join the dancers, set our feet wagging, and give our tongues a rest!"

Despite his gay banter, however, Frankland, as it soon appeared, was in no mood for the rout. The heat and press of the ball-room gave him a headache, and after a little he came to Agnes with a suggestion to go. The plea of illness was accepted as excuse, and they withdrew shortly after midnight, leaving the ball in full progress.

In order to get clear of the throng of carriages which blocked every approach to the palace, the coachman drove down a narrow street which led to the quay. Upon Frankland's suggestion they stopped and walked down upon the great mole, where, tempted by the fresh breeze and the moonlight, groups of people were still sauntering about, despite the lateness of the hour.

Following down to the outer edge of the vast structure, they sat down in silence, and with one accord, under the tranquillizing influence of surroundings so different from those just left, — the cold pure marble of the massive masonry beneath them, the murmuring splash of the water at its base, the fleeting

shadows of the shipping upon the gleaming tide, the moonlit stream itself outspreading from the nearer gloom in an ever-widening track of light until lost like a dream-river in the oozy mystery beyond.

Soothed and refreshed, they rose to go, with reluctance. Sauntering slowly down the now almost deserted quay, as they neared their carriage a group of sailors issued from the shadow and straggled across their path. One lagging in the rear drew back for them to pass. A face grotesque and rugged as a gargoyle gleamed for an instant in the moonlight and disappeared. Agnes uttered a shriek, and clung to Frankland's arm.

"What now! eh, what's the matter?"

She only shuddered for answer.

"Tell me! tell me, I say! Are you hurt? Did you hear, did you see something?"

"A spirit!"

"That — poh! I saw it too. A spirit? Yes, a very familiar one. Nothing more nor less than a lumbering sailor in his cups, stupidly staring at such a sudden revelation of beauty."

The few people left upon the quay, attracted by the outcry, began to gather toward the spot, whereupon Frankland made haste to hand Agnes into the carriage and drive away.

Arrived home, she still showed traces of her late agitation, but would give no cause for it, nor, indeed, talk about it at all. As next morning she seemed quite recovered, Frankland, if he gave the matter a thought, evidently considered it not worth reviving.

Two or three days afterwards, however, when he came in with the commonplace news that a Boston ship was in port, Agnes so plainly repressed a start that he could not but note it, and pondering the subject, evidently worked out some theory of explanation satisfactory to himself, for he presently burst out: —

"You keep housed too much, girl. How is it you never go abroad now-a-days?"

"The city is strange to me, and you seem to like best to go alone."

"I — eh — poh! What fol-de-rol! You are always busy when I chance to be going, I suppose; but come, I — I" — yawning — "will go with you at any time. Where shall we go?"

"Nowhere for me, you need n't."

"That place of Farmer's — what d' ye call it? Cintra. Egad! that 's it; we 'll go to Cintra. I 'll make a party up for to-morrow, if I live, and meantime you shall go with me to-day at high meridian to see the King wash the beggars' feet."

"I beg you will excuse me."

"There you go! What becomes now of the force of your reproach?"

"I meant not to accuse you, but excuse myself."

"Oh, never mind what you meant; since you succeeded in killing both birds, why, take the credit of it. But come along, I say; 't is a very edifying spectacle, — oh, vastly so; one comes away with his spirit uplifted! The dirtier the feet and the lousier the beggar the better for the soul; besides which, all the fashion of the town will lend its countenance!"

But Agnes still persisted in her refusal.

"Obstinacy, thy name is Surriage! Why, then, stay at home, and my blessing with you; or, what is better, call for the chaise and go buy some kickshaws to send home to your mother in this American ship."

"It — she is to sail soon?"

"Yes," consulting a memorandum, "hum-hum, hum-hum! 'Pathfinder,' Monday week; and meantime I have to make up a box to send to Sheafe; but — but I must go, or lose the sight — I must go, I say! What, no response yet? Heigh-ho! times change; you used to salute me on a much slighter occasion."

Despite her bustling movement there was a sound something like a sob as Agnes quickly left the room. Frankland looked after her with a momentary surprise; then tossing his head with a scarcely perceptible motion and closing the scene with an indolent smile, he adjusted his hat carefully over his new peruke and went his way to the palace.

The party to Cintra was made up of the confessedly choice spirits of the English colony, — Lord Torksey, Sir William Winton, Dr. Outwell, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, Mr. Horne, Mr. Vincent, Lady Betty, and others. It was strange Agnes should not feel at home among these merry and nimble-witted folks; yet it was plain enough she did not. Perhaps it was because she found herself somewhat at a loss in the cross-fire of their raillery, where the conversational shot and shell flew about so as to bewilder her. Or it might have been because — luckily for herself — she could not see the point of half their joking or understand

the abounding allusions and innuendoes with which their talk was seasoned. As, moreover, she had an ungracious fashion of smiling only at what she approved, and took no pains to conceal her disgust at indecency, she had as yet made small advance in popularity in her new home.

Cintra! Why attempt to tell again what has been told for all time! Turn backward or forward, as the phrase may suit, to the opening canto of "Childe Harold." A half-century more or less can make no difference in a spot uncursed by man's abode. 'T is the self-same picture Agnes and Frankland looked upon, where "horrid crags by toppling convent crowned," "cork-trees hoar," "mountain mosses," "sunken glen," "sunless shrubs," "tender azure," "orange tints," "vine and willow branch,"

"Mixed in one mighty scene with varied beauty glow."

Leaving behind the mighty scene after a fitting tribute of ecstasies, they pushed on over a desolate track to Mafra, and climbing up the steep hill which it so majestically crowns, came suddenly out upon the open square before it, and forthwith wreaked their breathless and undiscriminating enthusiasm upon the great building.

"Stupendous!"

"Amazing!"

"Prodigious!"

"What a magnificent church!"

"You mean monastery!"

"Palace — palace, man. Cannot you see for yourself 't is a palace?"

"And so it is," said Lord Torksey, settling the dispute, "all three in one: the two former enclosed in the latter. But here comes the guide, no doubt. Here, you fellow," — beckoning the man, — "come here and tell your story!"

"This most wonderful structure in the world," began the guide in his professional manner, "was built by John V. of Braganza, who falling sick and thinking himself about to die vowed, if he lived, to build this palace for the poorest priory in his kingdom."

"Which he meant should outdo the Escurial," interposed his lordship.

"As indeed it does," added Frankland, "in everything but taste."

"And vie with St. Peter's itself —"

"And why not? St. Peter's is nothing but a dome, and here is endless variety."

"So there should be, since artists all over the world had a finger in the pie."

But the dispute between Lord Torksey and Frankland was drowned in a clamor of exclamation.

"Mark you those colossal red columns!"

"And think of their being cut from a single block!"

"See, too, the enormous size of the black marble tablets yonder in the wall!"

"And the wonderful mosaics!"

"'T is said, you know, there are six organs in the chapel."

"But not a pane of glass in the whole structure."

"How monstrous odd!"

"What 's to keep the holy friars from rheumatics?"

"There are no friars!"

"No monks! What 's gone with 'em?"

"Put out, neck and heels! They grew so bloated with high living and puffed up with arrogance that Pombal sent them packing."

"And served 'em right, — the pampered rascals!"

"Before they came hither to lodge, 't is said, the whole brotherhood lived like swine in one squalid hut."

"Come, Sir Harry," cried Dr. Outwell, bursting in on the general talk after a whispering apart with the guide, "tell us how far is it across to yonder corner, — what 's the measurement of this front in width?"

"Humph!" — with a look of calculation — "five hundred feet or less."

"Poh! 't is nearer a thousand!"

"Never!"

"I 'll lay you something worth while," winking slyly at those standing near.

"What you will!"

"Let it be a supper, then, for the party!"

"Done!"

"This very night."

"Agreed!"

"But no, no; I will not take your money."

"Ho, ho, sir! you withdraw?"

"I will not take advantage of your youth and inexperience."

"You are vastly considerate."

"To deal fair with you, I have knowledge upon the point."

"Come, sir, this stale device shall not serve you!"

"But I assure you —"

"Why, for the matter of that, so have I. No, no; I will not let you off."

"You deserve your fate, then."

"All this bravado shall not avail you."

"Gentlemen, bear me witness!" cried the Doctor, appealing to the party. "I have warned him, and —"

"Come, come, sir; the proof! You shall not escape, I say. Here, my man," — beckoning the guide, — "what 's the measurement of this façade?"

"Seven hundred and sixty feet, to a hair."

"Beaten, egad! and by a beggarly ten feet. Ladies and gentlemen," with a profound congee, "you are to do me the honor of supping with me to-night!"

The invitation was accepted with shouts of applause.

The party returned to the city in time to sleep off the fatigues of the day and make a fresh toilet for their impromptu banquet.

They came together accordingly in the evening, in high good-humor, and loudly complimented Agnes upon the elegant appearance of the table she had spread in such haste. The talk at supper naturally turned upon the day's experience.

"I cannot but think of those poor priests turned out from their luxurious quarters," said Mrs. Churchill, Frankland's next neighbor at table.

"Yes, madam. Pombal is a bold man; but this is not his first offence, — he defied the wrath of Rome long ago by his proceedings against the Inquisition."

"I wonder he dared."

"It is not Rome alone he has had to encounter," spoke up Lord Torksey from the other end of the table. "'T was thought the mob would tear him to pieces when he put an end to the miracles in the churches."

"But they were false miracles," said Agnes, at his side; "and it was surely a good office to save the people from imposition by them."

"No more false than any miracles."

"You forget, sir, the miracles of Holy Writ?"

"I do not, madam; one miracle is the same as another. They are all lies, cheats, and impostures."

Agnes looked so profoundly shocked that his lordship laughed aloud.

"Pardon, madam; your rueful countenance quite undid me! But you should read Voltaire's account of a miracle. Do you remember, Sir Harry, the dead man brought to life after being several days defunct? All the gases blown away by the winds, the worms which have eaten the entrails have been eaten by swallows, the swallows by something else, and these again by falcons, and so on; each must restore that, and only that, he has taken; and when all is done, nothing of any avail without the soul."

"Hear, hear!"

"What now?"

"What 's his lordship at, — philosophy or polemics?"

The exclamations came from all sides.

"Sound sense, whatever else you may call it," said Dr. Outwell, across the table. "Go on, sir. — Elsewhere your Frenchman makes another good

point; to wit, that the more incredible your miracle is, the readier 't is believed. You, madam," turning to Agnes, "accept those in the Bible?"

"Most assuredly, sir."

"That is, you grant to the Jews a monopoly of doing wonders. But let me tell you, madam, other nations are not to be denied an equal privilege. In other words, all these peoples swear by their own tricks and lies, and discredit those of their neighbors. For the matter of that, the Greeks and Egyptians leave the Jews quite in the shade in this business of the miraculous; for every wonder claimed by the Jews, they will match it with a greater prodigy. They do as did a certain famous advocate to whom was produced a false bond; he did not trouble himself to plead to it, but directly produced a false quittance. The instance is not mine, madam, but Voltaire's."

"No more is the reasoning," broke in Sir William Winton, on the hostess's other hand. "'T is all admirably set forth in the 'Essai sur les Mœurs,' etc."

"Your Voltaire, witty as he may be," answered Agnes, stoutly, "shall not persuade me to discredit anything set down in the Holy Scriptures."

"Tut, tut, my dear!" cried Frankland, a little flushed with wine; "you do small credit to my teachings. But tell these gentlemen we need not cross the Channel for good sense in these matters. Our own Bolingbroke has said many things quite as much to the point."

"Oh, they 're all piping to the self-same tune, are

our great wits. Lord Chesterfield, 't is notorious, holds the like views," said Churchill.

"And Shaftesbury too," added Sir William.

"Yes," assented Frankland, "there is some notable talk in his 'Characteristics.'"

"He makes a bold stand there for independence," said his lordship, "and claims that that man alone is free who has in himself no hindrance in doing what his best judgment approves."

"What, sir!" said Agnes, recoiling slightly as she realized the drift of the discussion, "would you have me believe you a sceptic?"

"As Sir Harry shall define to you what a sceptic is, I will avow myself of the class."

"A sceptic," said Frankland, promptly, "is a philosopher who has doubted all he believes, and believes only what his reason has demonstrated true."

"Fie, sir! now *you* are stealing thunder from across the Channel," laughed the doctor; "'t was but a minute since —"

"True; I plead guilty, and must needs confess that while we rival our neighbors in boldness of thought, we come far short of their happy knack of putting things."

"Yes, in that respect," said Churchill, "Diderot distances all the world; he has the knack to perfection."

"That he has," chimed in Lady Betty, interrupting a whispered *tête-à-tête* with her host; "his 'Pensées' are very jewels."

"Are they not, madam?" cried Horne, enthusiastically. "Where is 't he says something like that

just quoted by Sir Harry — oh, very like indeed? A plague on my memory! But what matter for the words! It was to the general effect that what one has never put in question has not been proved, and what one has not examined without prejudice has not been examined."

"Yes," broke in Frankland; "but Diderot will none of your half-hearted sceptics, like Vincent yonder, who dares not give his thoughts tongue, and is frighted by consequences. Pass him the bottle, and prod him up!"

Vincent filled his glass, and retorted, —

"'Incredulity is sometimes the vice of a fool, and credulity the fault of a man of wit.' There's another *pensée* for you, and from betwixt the same covers."

"'T is time for all this fine sentiment to develop into action," cried Lord Torksey, rising with a brimming glass and a vinous bravado of manner. "Here's a long life to Reason, and a speedy downfall to priests and churches!"

"What, sir!" gasped Agnes; "would you put an end to churches?"

"With all my heart! What are they but machines of superstition?"

"Pray you, sir," interposed Lady Betty, "make an exception of the dear Catholic churches, which on great occasions are as diverting as a playhouse. By the bye, Sir Harry, to-morrow is All Saints, when the performance is like to be excellent; what say you, shall we go? — always with your leave, madam," bowing with mock deference to Agnes.

"Sir Harry needs not my permission to go where he will; else, be assured, madam, he would never go to a Christian church to make sport of the service."

"Fie, fie, my dear! Spare me before my guests! You may see now, ladies," — winking at those nearest at hand, — "where I come by the store of virtue for which I am so justly admired!"

"Pray you, madam, suffer him to unbend!"

"I warrant you he shall do nothing so very wicked!"

"Nay, I'll engage he shall be better than half them that go to pray!"

"Which would you rather, madam, that he were — a scoffer, or a hypocrite?"

"I would have him man enough not to be prevailed upon by evil counsels to do what his conscience approves not," answered Agnes in her sonorous contralto, and with unmistakable emphasis.

"Tut! tut!"

"Fie! fie!"

"Heyday!"

A chorus of deprecation arose from the table.

"How are we paid for our levity!" cried Lady Betty, with an affectation of dismay. "I swear to you, there is not enough of me remaining to fill a snuff-box. 'T is no marvel it has so silenced Sir Harry that he has no answer to my invitation."

"On the contrary, I shall tempt fate by accepting it. At what hour shall I wait upon your ladyship?"

"In time for the High Mass at ten o'clock, for then the pageant will be at its height."

"Agreed," said Frankland, not without a sly look askance at Agnes. "But how is this? nobody drinking! Fill up! fill up! and let us have a toast!"

"I — allow me, Sir Harry — I have a toast," cried a young man whose utterance proved the host's reproach to be unjust.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say — saints have ruled th' roast long enough. I say — down with saints 'n' up with sinners — Here 's — er — here 's to All Sinners' Day!"

The company had reached that happy stage when this readily passed muster as humor, and was greeted with uproarious applause.

"Have a care, sir, that you are not tempted into impiety," said Agnes, as the speaker resumed his seat.

Flushed with the success of his toast, the young man stared stupidly at her, collecting himself for a reply, when Sir William came to his aid.

"Faith, and so you will, tell our fair hostess, when she shall accomplish what the great Diderot quailed before, and define impiety, — consider the quandary, madam, — 'The Christian is impious in Asia, the Mussulman in Europe, the Papist in London, the Calvinist at Paris, the Jansenist at the head of Rue St. Jacques, the Moliniste at the bottom of the Faubourg St. Médard.'"

"Sir, I have neither the skill nor learning to dispute with you; but one may easily escape all imputation of the sort by a due regard for sacred things."

"And who shall say what is sacred? The Dog Anubis would claim as little homage here as the respectable personages of the Trinity in Egypt."

"Shame! For shame, sir! I will hear no more such blasphemy!" cried Agnes, starting from her seat in horror and indignation.

"Fie! fie! my dear, how peevish you are to night! Come, sit you down, and show these ladies and gentlemen that you have too much good sense to take offence at a harmless pleasantry uttered at your own table!"

"Why, madam, I am sure I had rather cut my tongue out than have vexed you so!"

"And I, believe me!"

"I had no thought but that we were all of one kind here to-night."

"Pray, Sir Harry, promise the dear lady we will offend no more in that fashion!"

"And that I will release you from going to Mass to-morrow if, as is most likely, that be the real cause of her vexation," said Lady Betty, joining the chorus of disclaimers.

For all answer, Agnes made a dignified courtesy to the expostulating circle and withdrew, Frankland hastening after to open the door and whisper a last remonstrance in her ear.

A burst of laughter followed her as she went upstairs to her own room. Thence, having gone to bed, she heard the merriment below wax more and more uproarious, and at last die gradually away in a vague uproar as she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

THE morrow came, — a day to lure all the saints back to earth, to hear into what surprising favor they were grown in the places where once they were scourged, tortured, hanged, and roasted alive. The white walls of Lisbon shone with dazzling radiance in the morning sun. Turret and spire from church, convent, and palace rose in glittering relief against a cloudless sky. Under a surface dead and shining as glass the Tagus hid its swift, resistless, seaward flow. Far off to the southwest, like a deep-blue zone against the paler sky, lay the sleeping ocean, sending inland a faint and fickle breath to stir the perfume from the late-blooming roses in the royal gardens at Alcantara, or shake out the blue-and-white banner above the turrets of St. George.

No serener day ever dawned upon fair and filthy Lisbon; nor did the sun in all his endless round look down upon such another whited sepulchre. Here dwelt, cheek by jowl, in comfortable neighborhood, magnificence and squalor, — a picturesque pair, each much beholden to the other. Not a year before, the keen-eyed Fielding, who was far from fastidious, called the fair capital of Portugal "the nastiest city in the world." It need only be added that his

standard of comparison was the London of the eighteenth century. Saint Sanitas was plainly not yet of the calendar; for hard by the splendid churches in which was preparing the gorgeous ceremonial of High Mass on that All Saints' morning were hundreds of dark, narrow, unpaved streets, in which lay muck and ordure ankle-deep, in which lay heaps of offal, foul rags, rotten bones, and all uncleanness. Amid it all little children played, — foul little darlings with tangled hair, and faces incrusted with dirt, — sucking in, as their native air, the noxious stenches which rose to pollute the wholesome breath of heaven.

But what then! The stench did not reach his Majesty in his palace yonder surrounded by rose-gardens. His hands were not begrimed with dirt, but washed white in perfumed water, loaded with rings, and hung with lace; yet for all his silken hose, it is much to be doubted whether even his Majesty's feet were clean.

As for Pombal, he had his hands too full with the Jesuits and the Inquisition to bother his head with scavenging. Who had ever heard of a statesman concerning himself with dirt? If an epidemic came, why, it had pleased the dear God to send it, and Masses must be said, and offerings to Our Lady of Safety, to quiet the people. Meantime everybody was happy; the children laughed at their gambols in the muck, the carrion-fly buzzed above the offal, and the sun bred maggots in the seething mass.

Everybody was happy, and grudged not to show it; with their holiday humor they put on their holi-

day dress,—drooping hats and cavalier cloaks for the men, gay bodices, heavy ear-rings, and the long-tasselled redecilla for the women. How gayly they laughed and chattered on their way to Mass, as they picked their steps without a sniff of disgust in and out among the rubbish, slime, and puddles!

Lady Betty slept late that morning. It was broad day when her maid pulled aside the curtains. But although this was according to her own express directions, her ladyship was inclined to be peevish, and swore roundly at the abigail for disturbing her. Indeed, as a matter of fact her ladyship had not been long in bed, and must naturally have felt somewhat jaded after her carouse of the night before.

Ordering breakfast to be served among her pillows, she restored the tone of her spirits by a dash of *eau-de-vie* in her dish of tea, and submitted herself at length in somewhat better temper to the hands of her maid.

The maid—poor woman!—had a grievous task, and exhausted all the resources of her art in the endeavor to make anything presentable of the wrinkled and haggard face before her. By dint, however, of plastering a double coat of rouge upon the saffron cheeks, touching up the lips and eyebrows, and adding one or two supplementary patches here and there, she produced a result which, however unlike anything human or natural, stood the test of the broad glare of light in which Lady Betty herself, with a look of no little satisfaction, criticised it.

This chief labor of the toilet done, the rest was simple enough; and accordingly in a few minutes

more, arrayed in her fine Paris gown and dainty French shoes, equipped with her fan, her snuff-box, her smelling-salts, and an enveloping aroma of civet, Lady Betty was ready to encounter the world.

Frankland was already sitting in his chaise at the door when she came down. He, too, lacked something of his wonted freshness. His eyes were dim and his air a little heavy; but he was speedily rallied into a livelier expression by the archness of his companion.

"Good Lord, sir! I am extremely shocked to have kept you waiting. I will not, however, inquire how long it hath been, lest it unsettle my nerves."

"I am but just arrived, madam."

"A pretty fib!"

"I protest."

"So much the better; for the thought of losing one minute of such society —"

"Tut, tut!"

"I swear to you, ten minutes' such loss would fill the day with misery! But how does madam this morning? Has she forgiven our pranks? Ha! ha! ha! Poor puss! How could she be other than jealous of such a man?"

"Your ladyship flatters me. But there you are wrong. Miss Surriage's spleen was not on my account. I wish it had been! No, no; odd as it may seem, she is sincerely pious."

"What! after all these years in such company?"

"Egad! I have tried hard enough to cure her of it"

"And she has been curing you, instead?"

"Eh?"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Come, you shall explain!"

"Do you know, sir, — O Lord, I am like to burst with laughing! — you yourself are suspected of piety — ha! ha! ha!"

"I, madam?"

"Ay, ay; another year among those Puritan whiners would have spoiled you."

"How now; am I not saucy enough to suit you?"

"You are but half-hearted in your sport. Many are of the opinion that a most enchanting rake was lost in you."

"I shall take care the opinion spreads no further."

"Fie, fie, sir! Unhold me! We are very public here; who knows but we may meet madam herself on the way to church?"

"No, no; we are safe from her. But what if we did? I am my own man, I hope!"

"Why, to be frank with you, 't is whispered not."

"As how?"

"That you are tied very securely to the sly Puritan's apron-string."

Frankland blushed with vexation, and bit his lip. His companion laughed aloud.

"And is that said of me?"

"Indeed is it."

"Why, I will disprove it by spending this very evening with your ladyship. Shall it be a party of two, or more?"

"Two, by all the saints we celebrate, — such another chance may never offer itself. But madam will hate me."

"She need not know."

"Then you are afraid to tell?"

"Not I; 't was but to shield your ladyship."

"Oh, I have not yet reached that pitch of awe of her!"

"Very good, then. I will acquaint her of my whereabouts. But where shall we sup?"

"At my lodgings, if you can make them serve the occasion."

"Agreed; I shall be with you!"

"Do look, sir, how the streets are swarming! I have never, in all my stay here, seen such a press; and all — poor fools! — on the way to church."

"What is the magnet draws them?"

"Why, partly the show, of course, as in our case; but chiefly, they would pray for their sins. To-day there is a chance of getting all these dead saints o' their side to say prayers in their behalf. Lord, sir! to what good is all this genuflection? What had you ever yet in answer to your prayers?"

"I have wasted no breath that way these late years."

"Nor I, — ha! ha! ha! My maid — silly wench! — affects to pray for me; but my sins were long ago past my own poor skill in reckoning; yet I do not see but we fare as well — you and I — as this sort who are forever mumbling prayers. Why, I should have no time for my picquet, my airings, my balls, suppers, and innocent flirtations, if I were to give way to this longing for prayer, — ha! ha! —"

The lively lady suddenly stopped. Her cheek blanched, even through the rouge.

"What was that?"

"'That?'"

Before there was time for an answer, a violent shock sent them both from their seats. Lady Betty shrieked, and clutched Frankland so that he could not rise from his knees.

There was an awful pause of thirty seconds, — to the appalled city it might have been thirty years. Then the solid earth rose beneath their feet, — rose and fell like the waves of the sea. Dizziness seized the brain. The sky whirled about like a teetotum. The universe seemed turned topsy-turvy, and the bonds of universal matter unloosed.

With ashen face and glaring eyes Frankland saw in his delirium the tall spire of the Cathedral rock to its base and fall in a mass of ruins upon the serried thousands within its doors. Everywhere towers, spires, and turrets sank crumbling to the ground, and the air was filled with an infernal roar of falling walls.

A sudden cry of "Kaya! Kaya!" arose in the street. It awoke Frankland to life and energy. Seizing the reins from the paralyzed driver, he turned the horse to the river, where the great quay, clear of surrounding buildings, offered a haven of safety. Hundreds besides themselves had heard the cry and were hurrying thither. It was already crowded when they came in sight. They might yet be in time — there was still space for more — a few yards only intervened — they were rushing on at frantic speed, when — they were stopped by a fearful sight.

Before their eyes the massive pier, loaded with its myriad shrieking, praying victims, turned slowly

over and sank to unfathomable depths below the quicksands.

Mute and dumb before the dread cataclysm, the hapless human creatures, like half-drowned flies, crawled in the dust awaiting their fate. Mother Earth had turned to a devouring fiend. There seemed but one refuge left; they turned with faint hope to the sea. Even as they looked, that hope changed to despair within them. The deep current of the Tagus was sucked up in a moment, leaving the broad bed of the river dry. Great ships were swept out to sea; others, whirling round and round like spinning-tops, dived out of sight in the swirl of waters. Another moment, and a despairing cry arose from the crowd: —

"The sea! the sea!"

The great Atlantic seemed indeed to have risen. Far off a mighty wall of water was seen moving slowly inland.

The last vestige of hope and courage died in Frankland's heart. He sat limp and nerveless, watching the oncoming flood quite unconscious, as it seemed, of the wretched creature who still clung to him, the foam of madness upon her painted lip, babbling of God and mercy.

The horse alone, with the instinct of preservation not yet extinct in him, whirled about with a wild snort and dashed back into the thick of the town.

Amid the ruins of fallen buildings, over the dead and dying, through the blinding dust which blotted out the sun and made darkness of noonday, he plunged on, unguided in his frantic course.

Suddenly the earth became still. As if with intelligent and devilish malice she yielded for a moment to the normal sway of gravitation. It was but for the briefest space. Before the poor people could shake off their dizziness, could look around and study chances of escape, — before they could do anything but hug to their heart a false, deluding hope, she broke loose again from the control of law and brought back chaos and anarchy.

The horse stopped. A great heap of ruins barred his way. There was a movement in the air. Frankland looked up. A dark mass tottered above them.

"Almighty God have mercy!"

The cry was wrung from him. He saw that the end had come. Lady Betty, in the last, futile, aimless struggle against her impending doom, caught his arm in her mouth and sank her teeth through into the living flesh. The next moment, with a roar of thunder, the mass descended and overwhelmed them in its ruins.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

COALS OF FIRE.

STARTLED by the first shock of the earthquake, Agnes rushed forth into the street. The house sank into a shapeless ruin behind her. A creature and an animal, she obeyed an animal instinct and cowered before the awful convulsion. Stock-still she stood, and gazed upon the wide desolation: saw the day change, in a moment, to night; saw death overtake every living thing about her, yet, held fast as in the horrid paralysis of nightmare, dumbly awaited her turn.

Well is it for humanity that such a strain cannot last, — that hope will skirmish in the very face of danger, and custom stale even extremest terror. With returning self-possession the first impulse was still animal and purely selfish, — the impulse of escape.

This was not for long; directly another impulse came, — came as visibly as lightning athwart a thunder-cloud. Straightway she was transfigured. The new thought possessed her wholly, driving out every vestige of fear and any meaner motive.

Everything is equally miraculous to the deep-going student. To the vulgar there are miracles and miracles, with the difference that some do not stir the blood. Here is one that should, — this spectacle of

a commonplace mortal sweeping in a trice from the lowest note to the highest in the gamut of being. No old-fashioned stock heroine of history ever struck more surely or rang forth more clearly her alt limit of range.

Now, for all their influence upon her, the accumulated horrors were as so many stage effects in the cosmic melodrama. They were as they were not. She was beyond their reach — unconscious. To whomsoever can realize it, such sublimity in an earthworm may well confirm a wavering faith in immortality.

Insensible henceforth to every danger, — the falling walls, the rush of the frantic crowd, the wild tramp of runaway horses, — she made her slow way to the Cathedral. The once stately pile lay before her a monstrous and unsightly heap of rubbish. She stood staring in bewilderment, doubting the evidence of her own senses, when a sudden cry arose from the crowd, —

"Fogo! Fogo!"

Too true it proved. The last fell element had been let loose upon the doomed city. For once the fires, kindled upon the altars, were glutted with sacrifice, as with hungry flaming tongues they revelled amid the ruins, and drank the blood of the shrieking victims beneath. Agnes turned shuddering from the sickening holocaust, and clinging to a forlorn hope set out to find Lady Betty's lodgings.

The darkness, the destruction of all landmarks, the wild confusion of the streets, brought her to a stand-still. Realizing presently the impossibility of

making her way through streets where at best she was but little acquainted, she stopped and looked helplessly about. At this moment there was a movement in the crowd. As by a common impulse, they all began rushing in one direction. The whispered word "Kaya" — whispered with a selfish but futile attempt at concealment — came to her ears. She tried to escape, but was borne along in the press.

Directly came the second shock of earthquake, — came, not in short, quick tremblings, as before, but with a long sideway roll, like a ground-swell at sea. With one accord the crowd flung themselves upon the ground and poured forth frenzied prayers to the Virgin.

"Misericordia! Misericordia!" The air resounded with the hoarse and impotent cry.

Reeling with vertigo, Agnes saw somewhere before her dizzied senses the vision of a flying chaise, a falling building. She stretched out her hands and made a drunken movement to go toward it, but was pulled down by the maddened crowd.

"See the heretic! she will not pray!"

"'T is the heretics are the cause of it."

"The city is overrun with them, and God is cursing us!"

"Misericordia! Misericordia!"

"Down with her!"

"To your knees, she-devil!"

"Let her not escape!"

"Misericordia! Misericordia!"

"She shall pray!"

"Make her kiss the cross!"

"Misericordia! Misericordia!"

Foreseeing a movement of violence, Agnes made a vain effort to escape. She was caught and dragged back.

"Kneel! kneel, foul witch!"

"Thrust her down!"

"Kneel, unbelieving devil!"

"'T is you are the cause of it!"

"Toss her in the fire!"

"Nay; give her the cross to kiss!— if she refuse, then the flames!"

Frantic with eagerness to pursue her search, and thinking only of escape, Agnes fervently kissed the cross, muttered an incoherent prayer, and was at length suffered to go.

Again the earth became still. With recovered equilibrium she started forth. That buried chaise! where had she seen it, — to the north, south, east, or west? Under which of all these heaps of ruins did it lie? But why search? Among the hundreds of buried vehicles, why waste time — precious time, whose loss might be fatal — upon that special chaise?

In this doubt and anxiety she groped her way distractedly amid the darkness and choking dust from ruin to ruin. In vain; in the universal waste there was no guide, no trace. Despairing, she called aloud the name of Frankland. Up and down among the masses of rubbish she went, repeating the cry, her clear strong voice resounding above the nearer tumult.

Stopping, with strained ears, to listen, she heard a feeble moaning near at hand. What then! There was moaning and groaning on every side. She bent

over the nearest pile of rubbish, and waited with bated heart and breath. Again it came, — plainly from beneath. To this side and that with frantic haste she flung the heavy bricks and stones. The perspiration fell from her face like rain; the dust blinded and choked her; the nails and splinters tore her arms till they streamed with blood. Unheeding all, she plied her task. She dug as a hunted animal digs for life. The moans became more distinct. Presently she made an opening.

"Frankland! Frankland!"

"Agnes!"

"'T is you — God be praised! Courage! courage! Keep up your heart; I will save you!"

"Air! air!"

"Yes — yes — one minute! You shall have it!"

Again she flew upon the rubbish as upon a mortal enemy, flinging out mortar, splinters, nails, and broken glass with infuriated zeal.

"Now — there! Can you breathe? Harry! darling! do you hear me?"

"Yes — ye-es!"

"Courage — wait then! — a few minutes — I will save you!"

Working at her task with might and main, pausing now and then to speak a comforting word to the prisoner, she came at length upon the heavy timbers of the roof interlaced and wedged together in such a ponderous mass above him that all her efforts to move them were in vain.

"Harry — these timbers — I cannot move them. I must go for help!"

"No, no; do not leave me!"

"Only for a minute!"

"Do not — do not go! I cannot live; it is of no use. My time is come!"

"You shall — you must live! I will save you! — Wait! wait! and be patient!"

"Stay! stay, Agnes! Agnes, darling, do not go — you'll never come back. The earth will swallow you — will swallow us both. The sea is rolling in! The Judgment-Day has come — speak, darling!"

"I am here!"

"Say — say while I can hear you — say before it is too late —"

"What shall I say?"

"That you forgive me —"

"Yes, yes!"

"All my wrong, — my cruel wrong against you!"

"I do; I do — all, everything — But oh — oh, darling! — 't is not for a sinful creature like me to forgive. Pray to God! pray to Him while I am gone!"

"Agnes! — Agnes! —"

The piteous cry rang in her ears as she darted away.

Flinging herself in the thick of the throng, she cried aloud for help. She might as well have called upon the winds. Men and women, — they were a herd of animals under the sway of one craven instinct. By such as were calm enough to listen, her absurd request was laughed to scorn.

"For pity — for mercy's sake, if ye be men! See! 't is here; 't is but a moment, to lift a beam — he will die! Help! help!"

A foreign woman, babbling idiocy, she was thrust aside and trampled upon by the fighting, struggling crowd.

"Gold! gold! I have money; I will make you rich! A thousand moidores — ten thousand — ten thousand gold moidores to him will aid me!"

Throwing herself again into the press, she darted from man to man as their faces held out promise of success. But greed, for the moment, was stifled. A fiercer and overmastering passion held sway. Her magnificent offers were spurned by the beggars of the streets.

Finding her efforts vain, back she rushed for one more trial of her unaided strength. Useless, as before; she could not budge the heavy beams an inch. Again she flew away for help.

Some sailors were passing in the crowd; she plucked one of them by the sleeve: —

"Help! help! Ten thousand moidores — broad gold moidores — for a moment's help!"

The man flung her off with a brutal oath; she staggered, and fell against his companion. The latter put out his arm to catch her.

"Job!"

"Ag!"

"God ha' sent ye. Quick, quick, mon! Lend a hond!"

"Wher-r?"

"Her-r's one buried. An he be not dead, oi ha' hopes to save him!"

He turned and followed her several paces, then stopped; a dark look of suspicion and hatred settled

down upon his face. She saw his thought in a flash. It was no time for equivocation. She told the truth at a fatal risk.

"Ay, ay, — 't is he; oi 'll not deceive ye. He ha' wr-ronged ye, 'n' oi ha' wr-ronged ye, 'n' ha' paid a heavy pr-rice for 't, too. Oh, Job, Job! 'T is no toime to horbor-r gr-rudges i' this awfu' moment!"

She held him clutched by the arm and gazed breathlessly into his face.

"Job! Job, mon! we stond wher' th' earth may open 'n' swallow us the next minute. Job, oi say, speak! Say ye forgi' me! say ye forgi' him!"

"'T is God's busness!" he muttered, with an awed and humbled look.

"Haste, haste, then! This way, mon! Ye wor a giant i' th' old days; an yer strength ha' not failed, we 'll save him yet!"

Powerful as Job was, the task before him strained every nerve in his stalwart frame. The heavy timbers were still half mortised together. He worked with a fierce will and determination, aided and urged on by the impatient woman at his side. Lifting a massive beam, he at length made an opening through which Agnes reached down and clutched the suffering man.

About to drag him forth, she was stayed by a ghastly sight. Lady Betty's lifeless figure, crushed almost beyond recognition, lay in the way. Nerving herself to the task, Agnes gently moved aside the body of the hapless woman, and at last, with the strength of hope and love, dragged forth the bruised and wounded man to the outer air. His wig gone,

his face bruised, his rich dress covered with lime and dust, there was nothing but his voice to identify him. Half leading, half carrying him between them, Agnes and Job followed in the wake of the crowd, intent like them upon quitting the ruined city by the nearest way.

An hour's hard tramp brought them to the open country. They were amazed to find it still day. The sun was blazing in mid-heaven. Ages seemed to have passed since that sun had risen. The pure air, the green trees and herbage, the singing birds, made their recent experience seem like an escape from Pandemonium. Placing Frankland upon the soft grass, Agnes tenderly brushed the dust from his face, and gazing a moment to assure herself that he was indeed living, burst into a hysterical fit of weeping.

Frankland was too exhausted to console her; Job made no attempt. Leaning against a neighboring tree, he gazed back upon the burning town with a stern and stolid look.

Recovering from her emotion, Agnes awoke to the situation. With characteristic energy, she began to discuss further measures for their safety and relief. Job listened in silence; the wounded man heard, and made a movement to speak. She leaned over him anxiously.

"Morley's!" he whispered hoarsely.

Agnes understood at once. Morley was a friend who had a country-seat a few miles from town. She drew Job aside to consult as to the best means of getting there, when Frankland called. She hastened to him. He was fumbling for his pocket. She saw

his intent, and drew out her own purse. Pressing it upon Job, she sent him off to find some means of conveyance.

He was gone an hour, and came back leading an ass, for which he had paid an exorbitant price. Meantime Agnes had learned from stragglers and fugitives the wildest rumors from the town. The criminals had escaped from prison, and bands of ruffians were roaming the countryside, robbing and murdering all who fell into their clutches.

Filled with new fears, she hastened their departure. In her uncertainty as to the locality, they were several hours in reaching their destination. The house was already filled with panic-stricken refugees when they arrived, but their kind-hearted host took them in with warmest welcome.

Frankland, who meantime had somewhat recovered from the shock he had sustained, bespoke a place for Job. The latter curtly refused the hospitality.

Presently Agnes was called away to make some provision for their accommodation. Left alone with the rough stranger, and realizing his great obligation to him, Frankland feebly attempted to express his gratitude. Job listened with impatience, and answered bluntly, —

"Spare yer thonks! Ye moight ha' died yonder, for a' o' me!"

Frankland regarded his benefactor with natural perplexity.

"'T was for her oi ha' done it. Gi' yer thonks to her!"

"At least I owe you my life —"

"Ye owe it to her, oi say," said Job, fiercely, "and God Almighty deal wi' ye as ye remember it!"

"Amen!" groaned the conscience-stricken man, overawed by the unexpected rebuke.

There was a silence of several moments, when Job made a move to go.

"Hold! you shall not go without leaving me your name. Willingly or unwillingly you have saved my life; I shall not forget it. I am in no condition to reward you now, but I shall not forget it. I will have an eye to your welfare, and if I live you shall have your deserts. Meantime, my good fellow, take this! I wish it was more, but 't is all I have at the moment!"

Agnes entered at the moment and heard the concluding words. She sprang forward, thrust back the proffered purse, and turned toward Job with a pallid face and deprecating gesture.

Plainly it was well for Frankland that he had not spoken these words in health and vigor. The rough sailor cast upon him a look of immeasurable disdain, and without a word strode from the room.

"Job — Job!" cried Agnes, rushing after him, "ye will not go without a word to me! Job — Job, oi say!"

But his form was already lost in the gathering darkness, and the sound of his heavy footsteps smote with remorseless impact on her heart.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JUSTICE.

BRISTLING with quaint architectural details, the picturesque old castle of Belem stands mid-stream upon a rock near the mouth of the Tagus. Scarcely two miles from Lisbon, it yet escaped, as by a miracle, the fate of that city. From its lofty battlements the dismayed King witnessed the destruction of his capital. "Here I am," he wrote gloomily to his sister, "a King without a capital, without subjects, without raiment." Poor, royal puppet! the last touch is characteristic.

Stunned and shocked, his demoralized followers gathered about their leader. With eyes wide opened to their late frivolity and wickedness, and accepting the earthquake as a direct punishment for their sins, they made haste to put on an outward and ill-fitting repentance. Giving up for the moment their dissolute practices, they abated the splendor of their garb, forsook the theatres and bull-fights, and thronged the churches.

Hither came also the remnant of the English colony. Friends and kindred lost and homes destroyed, they met with heavy hearts and humbled looks.

Finding no longer any solace in the brilliant but arid philosophy of Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Messieurs the Encyclopedists, they got out their neglected prayer-books and conned again the rubric of the derided faith of their fathers.

No sally of wit or clever scoffing now enlivened their gatherings; they met in tears and silence, save for condolings over their mutual losses and bereavements. The fact that from day to day faint tremblings of the earth were still apparent may have been a potent factor in their state of spiritual abasement.

There, with the rest, established in cramped and makeshift lodgings, were Agnes and Frankland. Although the latter was found to have sustained no serious physical harm, he was slow in recovering. He had at least been badly shaken up. But severe as had been the shock to his nerves, it was nothing, as presently appeared, to a more tremendous shock he had otherwise received. Agnes noted with concern a change in him, — a subversive change. He was sobered to the core. He passed days in speechless meditation. Nothing availed to woo back the old gay smile to his lips. His watchful nurse broke in upon this abstraction with repeated attempts at cheer or solace. He noted her intent and feebly strove to rally, or more frequently folded her in his arms and gazed into her eyes with a pathetic tenderness which thrilled while it puzzled and pained her.

One morning, soon after he was able to go about, he called for writing materials and spent the day at his desk. He seemed to be making up a long-neglected

correspondence. Despite all expostulation, he stuck to a task plainly beyond his strength. He arose in the evening exhausted. Seating himself wearily in the window, he called Agnes to him. She went and knelt at his side.

"My darling, I want to tell you what I have been doing."

"You have been working too hard."

"It is something which nearly concerns you."

"Does n't everything you do concern me?" she asked, with an affectionate smile.

"I have invited a great many people to come and see you."

She strove to suppress a puzzled look.

"Many, no doubt, you will not care to see."

Her face brightened directly; here was a sign of reviving interest in life and the world; she made haste to encourage it.

"Whoever 't will please you to have come, be sure I will make welcome."

"But 't is best for you they should come; for your sake I could wish all who have ever seen or heard of you should be here."

Agnes looked concerned; this talk seemed a little wandering.

"You do not understand," he said, reading her face. "'T is no wonder you do not; read, then, for yourself!"

He unfolded and spread before her one of the notes he had been writing, and instinctively turned away his head. Several moments he sat thus, staring from the window with a look as if awaiting some move-

ment on her part. She did not speak. There was a profound and breathless silence in the room.

Turning at length, he beheld her upturned face close to his, the sunset light falling like a halo about her head, her eyes shining with a glorified beauty through the tears of love and gratitude which, streaming forth, flooded her face.

And not a word was spoken.

Next morning the principal English residents and many of the native nobility, as well as certain high officials at Court, received cards of invitation requesting the honor of their attendance at the marriage of Sir Charles Henry Frankland, Bart., and Miss Agnes Surriage, both of Hopkinton, America.

A day or two before the appointed time Agnes came to Frankland with the request that an effort be made to discover Job and bid him to the wedding. With a passing look of surprise Frankland assented. But Agnes was not through. She had something else to tell. Simply and without reserve, then, she related the history of Job's life and disappointment, and her own connection with it.

Frankland heard for the first time, and with the deepest interest, the story of the man whose path he had so unconsciously crossed. Let it be taken as characteristic of him, or incidental to his mood, that he directly set on foot a vigorous search to discover Job's whereabouts. The attempt was the more hopeless from the fact that no trace could be found of the American ship, nor could it be ascertained whether she had escaped or been destroyed. No stone, however, was

left unturned; messengers were sent to make inquiries among the sailors, and as a last resort Agnes herself caused messages to be left at every place where he could be expected to turn up. All efforts, however, seemed fruitless; up to the eve of the wedding-day no tidings had been heard of the missing man.

The eventful morning at last came. The story of Frankland's rescue, the fame of Agnes's beauty and devotion, had spread far and near. The act of reparation, moreover, was so in keeping with the spirit of the hour, that long before the time appointed the magnificent church was thronged, not only with the invited guests, but by the general public, by whom the wedding was hailed as the first joyous omen after a night of horrors.

At another time, or upon a different occasion, Agnes would have been abashed in presence of the unexpected concourse. Now, it might have been the old meeting-house at Marblehead, or the Commissary's little chapel at Hopkinton, for all she heeded of the surroundings. Her face wore the serene calm of a Sister of Charity; her dress was almost as simple.

A Roman Catholic priest performed the service. All creeds and ceremonials were then as one. God was the real priest, and consecrated the intent which was the essence of the sacrament.

Passing down the long aisle on the arm of her husband, with the rich light falling upon her bowed head, the benison of the priest still resounding in her ears mingled with the joyous pealing of the organ and the hum of the admiring spectators, Lady Frankland suddenly raised her eyes. Was it pure

accident, or some inexplicable impulse? Peering from behind a neighboring column she saw a swarthy face, with eyes fixed steadfastly upon her. The look was grave and intent. Often and again in after years she called up that scene, in which amid all the grand and sumptuous surroundings that rugged face was the central point of interest, and comforted herself with the assurance that there was neither grief nor anger in Job's parting look.

She betrayed her surprise in a tightened clutch of her husband's arm; he looked up in time to catch a glimpse of the retreating figure, and exchanged a look of intelligence with her.

Whether on account of the interruption of business pending the rebuilding of the city, or of his own health, Frankland determined to return to England. He had already received thence a flood of congratulations from friends and kindred on his escape. In return, he wrote back the story of his deliverance and marriage.

They were detained several weeks waiting for their transport, — an English ship bound from Brazil, which was to touch at the port and reload for England.

A crowd of English and Portuguese went to see them off. It was surprising how popular Lady Frankland had suddenly become. Superlatives were wanting in which to set forth her grace, beauty, and accomplishments. She accepted the ovation quietly, and with certain reserves and remembrances.

The voyage home was marked by two incidents

of differing importance. Whether out of regard to Agnes's friends at home, or the prejudices of his own family, Frankland had the marriage service performed again, — this time by an English clergyman, with English witnesses and ceremonial.

The marriage proved a very agreeable diversion to the passengers. The bride was overwhelmed with such gifts as the case admitted of. Some were odd enough. The captain, in want of anything more fitting, gave a favorite Brazilian ape of great intelligence and docility.

Lady Frankland was much amused with her strange pet, and it was in connection with it that the second incident above mentioned occurred.

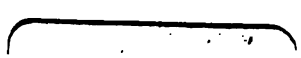
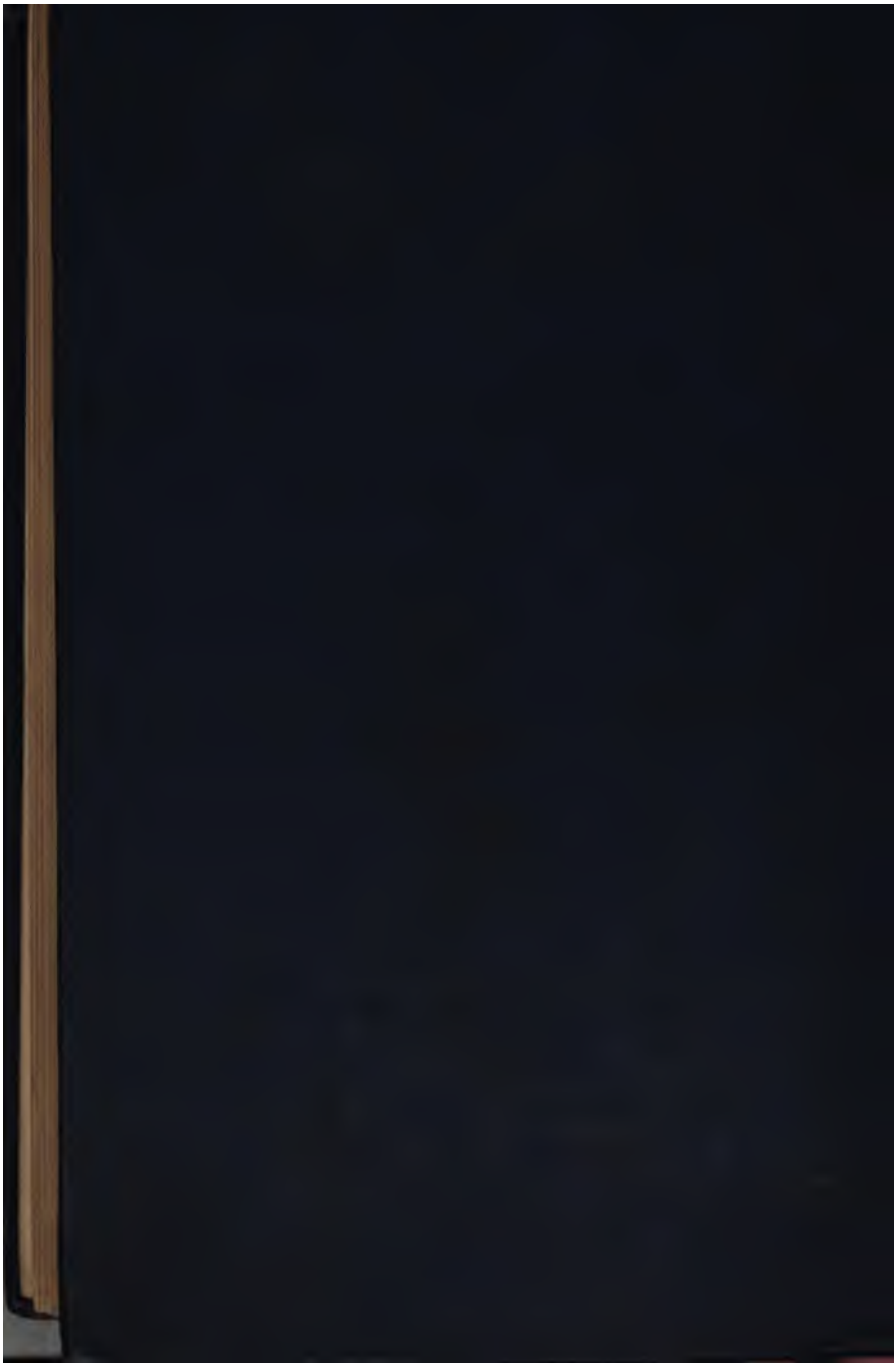
It chanced one windy day they shipped a sea and a lady passenger got soused. She had carelessly hung her clothes to dry where the busy, roving ape caught sight of them. The hoop-petticoat was a novelty of untold possibilities to the monkey genius. Hastily investing himself with it — the waistband drawn tightly about his neck — he suddenly appeared upon deck. Agnes stood near the gangway when he came bounding up. Knowing of the lady's mishap, she understood the situation at a glance, and made a futile effort to rescue the garment. But quick as a flash the ape darted past her and went cavorting about the deck.

The grotesque appearance of the hairy legs and tail below the skirt, and the sedate, mischievous face above, the screams of the passengers, the shocked consternation of the owner, — the clergyman's maiden sister, — proved too much for Agnes's gravity. She

gave way to irresistible laughter. Like a mountain stream bursting forth to the sunlight after a long course underground, her laughter came pealing forth, — the native sound of mirth. With choking voice she tried to reassure the indignant lady. With tears streaming down her face she pursued the agile and roguish trespasser.

Unmoved by the spectacle from the ludicrous point of view, Frankland was, however, profoundly interested. It suddenly occurred to him that he had not heard Agnes laugh like that for years, — not since the old happy days at Tileston Street. He was startled at the thought. It was a revelation which sent a tardy reflection backward upon certain dark passages in the past. Like an antidote administered with the bane, however, the consolation here came hand in hand with the remorse. Already justice had wrought its beneficent restorative work. The wound at least was healed, if he could not forget the scar.

One last triumph awaited the happy bride. Arrived in London, they drove straight to Clarges Street. Frankland had sent word to have the house made ready. The news of the ship's arrival had preceded them, and they had already been expected some hours, when at length, just at nightfall, the carriage drove up to the door. They found the house blazing with light, but thought no more of it than that the servants wanted to emphasize their welcome. As they weariedly mounted the steps, full of the home-returning thoughts of rest and comfort, the doors were flung open before them. In the midst of the glare of light and the crowd of ser-

vants stood Mrs. Frankland and her daughters. Agnes stopped as if petrified, with her foot upon the portal.

Frankland instantly stepped forward; but his mother, with a certain fine instinct repressing her natural impulse, passed him by, and advanced toward the doubting figure upon the threshold. Putting her arms about the child of the poor fisherman of Marblehead, she cried in broken tones, "My daughter!"